Book No. 23. A. Branch Hq. Nigeria Area.

SPEC. COL 966.7 R237a 1923
Rattray, R. S. 1881-1938.
Ashanti

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ASHANTI

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GYAMAN
ASHANTI
AHAFO
BRONG
SEFWI
UPPER DENKERA
WASSAW
GOLD COAST
EASTERN AKIM
KREPI
AKWAMU
AKWAPIM
Bontuku
Kintampo
Nsoko
Wankie
TANO OBOASE
Nkoranza
Attabubu
Kete
Kratchi
R. Volta
R. Tekiman
Ejura
Tanosu
Mampon
Nsuta
Juabin
R. Tano
Coomassie
Kokofu
Bekwai
Bosomtwe
Santeman
Dubenya
Obuasi
Accra
R. Bosompra
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A temple and priest of 'Nyame, the god of the sky

ASHANTI

BY

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An Elementary Mole Grammar

COLUMBIA COLLEGE
600 SOUTH MICHIGAN
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60605

OXFORD
AT THE CLARENDON PRESS
1923

Oxford University Press
London Edinburgh Glasgow Copenhagen
New York Toronto Melbourne Cape Town
Bombay Calcutta Madras Shanghai
Humphrey Milford Publisher to the UNIVERSITY

SPEC.COL 966.7 R237a 1923
Rattray, R. S. 1881-1938.
Ashanti

Printed in England

PREFACE

This volume contains the results of the first year's work of the new Anthropological Department in Ashanti, West Africa. It opens up what, I believe, is largely new ground, or perhaps rather, old ground treated in a new way.

As the setting up of this Department was somewhat in the nature of an experiment, it will not, I believe, be out of place to hazard some remarks about it, as the matter affects not merely our own local or even national interests, but those of every great colonizing power.

It must be remembered that the creation of Departments of Anthropology in Colonies and Protectorates where governments are dealing with peoples who are classed as 'backward' or 'primitive' has been advocated long and earnestly by scientists. They have not ceased to press for the application of Anthropology to the work of practical administration among the 'native' races. It may be mentioned that in Lieut.-Col. Sir Richard Temple, Bt., C.B., C.I.E., this cause has had one of its staunchest and strongest advocates.

The objects and reasons for the formation of such Departments are concisely summed up in the findings of a Royal Commission on University education which sat in 1913, and in a report drawn up by the British Association, of which the following are extracts:

'It is as important that officials and others intending to spend their lives in the East, or in parts of the Empire inhabited by non-European races, should have a knowledge of their racial characteristics, as that they should be acquainted with their speech, and we believe that the Colonial office shares this view' (Royal Commission Report). And again: 'An accurate acquaintance with the nature, habits, and customs of alien populations is necessary to all who have to live and work amongst them in any official capacity, whether administrators, executive officers, missionaries, or merchants, because in order to deal effectively with any group of mankind it is essential to have that cultured sympathy with them which comes of sure knowledge.'

The formation of this particular Department in Ashanti was directly due to the initiative of the present Chief Commissioner, Mr. C. H. Harper, C.M.G., O.B.E. He advocated its creation on the ground that it was necessary to collect and preserve before it was too late a record of Ashanti customs and beliefs. This recommendation was very opportune, for so fast are conditions changing in Ashanti that had the work been postponed for long it is doubtful whether much information would have been obtained. It must be confessed, however, that from a financial point of view the moment was not particularly favourable.

The Gold Coast Government, like others, was struggling with serious difficulties resulting from the Great War and might be laying itself open to criticism for sanctioning a new venture, the success of which was problematical.

To the Colonial Office and to the Governor, Brig.-Gen. Sir Frederick Gordon Guggisberg, K.C.M.G., D.S.O., as guardians of the funds of the Colony, not only anthropologists but the Ashanti people owe a debt of gratitude for sanctioning the setting up of this new Department in such difficult times, the more especially as many might argue that this country and people had carried on well without it in the past.

I had the honour to be chosen as the first Head of the new Department, being seconded for that purpose from the Political side of the Gold Coast Administration. At the outset I had to decide which of two possible methods of working to follow. The first was to treat the new Department as a Central Office or Clearing House, which meant that it would communicate with all persons likely to be interested in its work, ask for descriptions of customs and beliefs that had come under their observation, and request that they would forward the results of their investigations to the Head of the Department, who, while conducting independent researches, would give advice and assistance with regard to methods to be followed.

If this procedure had been followed the Department in a very short time would have had a great mass of material at its disposal, very difficult to classify, examine, and verify, and requiring probably the undivided attention of its Head.

The second method was for the Head of the Department to

begin work by himself, making a detailed investigation into the beliefs and customs of this people.

I chose the second method, and after a year of work on these lines, I feel convinced that I came to a right decision. It must be remembered that in Ashanti really valuable anthropological information is possessed by comparatively few of its inhabitants. Those who have accurate knowledge are the older men and women who have few dealings with the foreigner, live secluded lives in remote villages, and are ignorant of or indifferent to the social and religious changes brought about by the European. If these 'ancients' are asked to converse through the medium of an interpreter, who often does not know English at all well and is generally quite incapable of rendering into English many of the words used in the vernacular, they usually become reticent and suspicious, or at any rate uninterested, and likely to withhold their stores of knowledge. If, however, they are able to talk freely and without the aid of an interpreter to one who has their confidence, who they know can sympathize with them and understand not only their language, but their modes of thought and pride of race, then and then only are they likely to pour out their store of ancient lore and to lay bare their thoughts. Knowing this, and as I fortunately possessed the trust and confidence of many of these old people and was able to converse directly with them, I thought I could not do better than attempt at once to secure and preserve as groundwork for future investigation the valuable material which could only be gained by direct and personal touch with those who possessed it. I felt that if once this all-important knowledge could be gained, it would form the background for future research. I hope that the short delay that may ensue before my colleagues are asked to step in, and assist the new Department, will not be misunderstood by them, as I trust that the present activities of the Department will aid investigators in the future and increase the value of their work.

I have mentioned in the opening paragraph of this preface that the contents of this volume represent one year's labours. This is in one sense an accurate statement, for I think that there is not a single subject in this book the full facts of which I was cognizant before I undertook this work. In another

sense, however, this statement is incorrect because the foundations upon which this twelve months' work is built have been gradually laid during many years' residence in Ashanti.

It is clear, I think, that a State Department, financed by public money and not by private institutions or individuals, should be 'a paying proposition', as our friends in the United States would say, especially at the present time. It cannot be expected that when rigid economy is imperative, a local Government should set up and maintain a new Department, where work, however valuable it may be from a purely scientific point of view, results in information of interest only to men of science. Such a Department should prove itself to be also of practical value to the Administration, and it is of importance to recognize this point. It has not so much, in my opinion, been the inability of governments in the past to realize the value to them of what may well be called the Intelligence Department of an Administration, as the failure to make more use of the experience of men combining some experience of anthropology with the knowledge of Colonial Administration and its practical needs. It seems to me therefore that the best results are likely to be obtained by training as anthropologists, men already possessing some experience of the people, the language, and the country generally, and also of the problems of administration.

With reference now to the contents of this volume, most of the chapters deal with what is known as social anthropology, because in my opinion the most urgent need of this science to-day is not so much the physical[1] or technological side of the subject, or of broad general surveys of districts or areas, as minute and exact studies with accurate detailed accounts of social and religious beliefs, rites, and customs.

The material from which data can be obtained for this branch of anthropological study is disappearing so rapidly in Ashanti that it will be lost entirely within the next few years.

As I have stated above that an Anthropological Department should, in my opinion, be looked upon as in the nature of an 'Intelligence Department' to the Administration, and I have

[1] In an appendix to this volume will be found the results of some physical measurements taken. These have been treated statistically by Mr. L. H. Dudley Buxton, M.A., Lecturer in Physical Anthropology at Oxford, and for this and his note on the results I am much indebted.

suggested that it should show practical, tangible results and not merely supply information to be pigeon-holed in the archives of an anthropological library, perhaps I may be permitted to illustrate this point from the present volume.

A much wider public than anthropological readers will have heard of the romance of the ' Golden Stool ' of Ashanti. I suppose it is no exaggeration to state that this symbol has directly involved the British Government and the British tax-payer in two costly ' little ' wars; and lately it might well have been the cause of a third.

The official reports of this event read like a passage from the *Arabian Nights*. This stool had been hidden for over twenty years—since the Ashanti rising of 1896. During 1921 some labourers, working on a new government road, were all unknown to themselves on the point of unearthing it from where it had been buried (enclosed between two great brass pans), on the spot over which the new road was to pass.

The custodians of the stool, who reached the spot just in time to prevent it being dug up, scared off all the labourers by telling them that there was buried the spirit of small-pox which would seize upon any one who further disturbed the soil. They returned in the dead of night. The Golden Stool was dug up and conveyed by seven old men to the hut of one Yao Kyira, alias Wereko the chief of Aboabogya. The new hiding place gradually became known to several persons whose cupidity overcame all other scruples, and gradually, piece by piece, they stripped the Stool of the massive gold ornaments or insignia with which it was adorned. One day an old woman recognized one of these gold ornaments that was offered for sale, and then the whole matter came to light.

The robbers were only saved from instant death by being rushed into prison under our escort; a few hours later the whole of Ashanti was in a state of national mourning and tribulation, far greater than at the loss of any king.

' When war comes, rumours come,' runs an Ashanti proverb, and wild rumours were about to the effect that we, i.e. the Government, had seized the Stool or were about again to demand it. Local feeling ran very high, and we were prepared for all eventualities.

The masterly handling of this delicate situation by the present Chief Commissioner of Ashanti is now past history. The point I wish to bring forward is that he has officially given to this new Department some of the credit for warding off what might have been very serious complications.

The article on ' the Golden Stool ', which was originally a confidential memorandum, written a few days after events assumed a critical aspect, is now published in this volume. In the words of the 1921 Annual Report for Ashanti, ' Captain Rattray's researches have already proved of practical value, for it is due to his investigations that much that is new in the history of the " Golden Stool " has come to light, and with such knowledge Government has seen its way to deal in a sympathetic spirit with the disturbing event of its desecration '.

This statement I venture to think proves that even after this Department had been in existence for only a few months it had in some measure, justified its formation.

Our appreciation of what the Golden Stool meant to the Ashanti nation found an echo a year later during the ceremony of the presentation to Her Royal Highness, the Princess Mary, Viscountess Lascelles, of an Ashanti Silver Stool from the Queen Mothers of Ashanti. Sewa Akoto, the Senior Queen Mother, in her speech on presenting the Stool to Lady Guggisberg, C.B.E., for transmission to Her Royal Highness, said : ' This Stool does not contain our soul as the Golden Stool does, but it contains all the love of the Queen Mothers.'

I have devoted a large part of this book to the description of customs having a particular bearing upon religion. It is, of course, impossible in Ashanti to dissociate religion from the examination of almost any aspect of social life, but I have referred especially to customs relating to the cult of gods and ancestors.

I sincerely hope that some of this material will be of value to African missionaries. I have always maintained that necessary and valuable as anthropological training is to the administrator or merchant it should be an indispensable adjunct to the training of the missionary.

I feel that I do not need to make any excuses for having taken part in what old Bosman undoubtedly would have called

'Heathen and Idolatrous rites' in order to elucidate more fully a fascinating problem—the origin of religious beliefs; but lest I should offend any whose esteem and regard I value highly, I would here like to reiterate what I have written elsewhere:

'I approached these old people and this difficult subject (their religious beliefs) in the spirit of one who came to them as a seeker after truths, the key to which I told them they alone possessed, which not all the learning nor all the books of the white man could ever give to me.

'I made it clear to them that I asked access to their religious rites such as are herein described for this reason. I attended their ceremonies with all the reverence and respect I could well accord to something which I felt to have been already very old, before the religion of my country had yet been born as a new thought, yet not so entirely new, but that even its roots stretched back and were fed from that same stream which still flows in Ashanti to-day.'

The stream crosses the path,
The path crosses the stream;
Which of them is the elder?
Did we not cut a path to go and meet this stream?
The stream had its origin long long ago.
The stream had its origin in the Creator.
He created things,
Pure pure Tano.[1]

Another point to which I would wish to draw attention is the interesting Exogamous Patrilineal Divisions, called *ntoro*, and the Ashanti ideas concerning the transmission of blood. These are illustrated in the large Genealogical Chart which will be found in the first chapter of this volume, and are explained in the article to which I give the place of honour in this book, 'The Ashanti Classificatory System'. The chapter on the Drum Language will, I hope, be of some interest and value, and also my suggestion as to the original form of the well-known African celt.

I have taken every opportunity, while gathering material for this volume from my Ashanti friends, to impress upon them

[1] Extract and translation from the Drum language.

strongly that our culture, our ideas, arts, customs, dress, should not be embraced by them blindly to the entire exclusion and extinction of what is good, just, and praiseworthy in their ancient national institutions.

I have told them that their ideal should be, not to become pseudo-European, but to aim at progress for their race based upon what is best in their own institutions, religion, their manners and customs.

I have told them that they will become better and finer men and women by remaining true Ashanti and retaining a certain pride in their past, and that their greatest hope lies in the future, if they will follow and build upon lines with which the national *sunsum* or soul has been familiar since first they were a people.

I have told them that the work of the new Department is to study their institutions, which the rising generation is tempted to despise, and that it is anxious and ready to help and advise the nation as to what will be of assistance to it—conserving, and not destroying, all those customs that are best and not detrimental to progress.

I have tried to make the people understand that we are here among them to help them by grafting on to their institutions such of our own as will enable them to take their place in the commonwealth of civilized nations, not as denationalized Ashanti, but as an African People who will become the greater force and power in the Empire because they have not bartered the wealth of their past, metaphorically and not infrequently in reality, for a coat, a collar, or a tie.

The response to this appeal, which was my *apologia* for prying into their secrets, the genuine understanding, the gratitude and the wish for a helping hand to assist them over this critical stage of their evolution, has been a very remarkable feature of the work of the new department.

The Ashanti seem to be at the parting of the ways. One path leads, I believe, to the unrest and ferment we see on every hand among peoples whose institutions we have either deliberately broken down or as deliberately permitted to decay. The other path, which in no way postulates mental stagnation, leads at least to some surer ground, because it will leave landmarks

which the particular genius of that people will always recognize, and will help them along the road of progress however difficult it may be.

As a result of somewhat informal talks on these lines, I have had from Chiefs, from the Queen Mothers, and from elders, both old men and old women, more assistance than I ever hoped to obtain, and every possible opportunity to conduct these investigations, and guidance and help when the path was obscure and full of difficulty. It is impossible to speak too highly of their aid, for without it I could not have achieved anything of value.

I have again to acknowledge the interest and assistance of Dr. R. R. Marett and of the Oxford School of Anthropology, whose pupil I have the honour to have been. I am most grateful also to Professor and Mrs. Seligman. Professor Seligman, F.R.S., most kindly has gone over with me the whole of my manuscript and helped and advised me. Mrs. Seligman first inspired me with enthusiasm for the Classificatory System and its vital importance in the elucidation of the problems of social anthropology.

I have already stated the debt I owe to my African friends, men and women, and it is not easy to single out any one in particular, but there are one or two special tributes I would like to pay. Two of these are to the dead. The first is to Kakari, an old Ashanti aristocrat, who left his own village to follow me, contributing each day from his treasures of African lore. Without his help and influence at the beginning of my work I could not have achieved one-half of what is here recorded, and I gratefully pay this tribute to his memory. The second is to my friend Sewa Akoto, the late Queen Mother of Mampon. She was a fitting representative of a class for whom I cannot speak without unbounded enthusiasm, the Queen Mothers and old women of Ashanti.

Among the living to whom I am indebted I have a host of friends too numerous to mention, chiefs and hunters, priests and priestesses, medicine men and witch doctors. However, I must especially record the name of Osai Bonsu, Paramount Chief of Mampon.

I am most grateful to my colleagues in whose Provinces and

Districts it has been my good fortune to work, for their unfailing courtesy and interest.

I am indebted to my brother-in-law Sir Henry F. New for having kindly undertaken the reading and correction of all proofs.

Lastly, I have to acknowledge on the behalf of the Colonial Government and of the Department the generosity of the Oxford University Press, in undertaking, with the assistance of the Colonial Government, the publication of this volume, and in giving it such an attractive form. To the Secretary and Delegates I have the honour to tender my sincere thanks.

R. S. RATTRAY.

OXFORD, *March* 1923.

CONTENTS

		PAGE
PREFACE		5
CHAP.		
I.	The Ashanti Classificatory System	21
II.	*Ntoro* Exogamous Divisions	45
III.	Matrilineal Descent in Ashanti	77
IV.	Religion. Introductory	86
V.	A Wednesday *Adae* Ceremony	92
VI.	A Queen Mother's *Adae* Ceremony	105
VII.	A Sunday *Adae* (*Kwesidae*) Ceremony witnessed on the 4th September 1921	107
VIII.	A Wednesday *Adae* Ceremony witnessed on the 21st December 1921	109
IX.	A Brong *Adae* Ceremony	113
X.	The Sacred Grove at Santemanso	121
XI.	A Ceremony witnessed while the Burial Quarters of the Kings and Queens of M—— were undergoing repair	133
XII.	The *Baya* Ceremony witnessed at Nsoko in Northern Ashanti on the 29th May 1922	136
XIII.	'Nyame, the Supreme Being	139
XIV.	The Gods (*abosom*): the making of a Shrine	145
XV.	The Apo Ceremony at Tekiman	151
XVI.	The God Tano: a Visit to his Temple	172
XVII.	The God Tano: a Visit to his Rock	188
XVIII.	The God Tano: the Ceremony at the Source of the River	195
XIX.	The God Tano: some of his 'Sons'	199
XX.	The *Afahye* Ceremony	203

CHAP. PAGE

XXI. Land Tenure and Alienation 213

XXII. The Drum Language 242

XXIII. The Golden Stool 287

XXIV. The Silver Stool 294

XXV. Ashanti Goldsmiths and Gold Weights, with a Note on the Metal Vessels called *kuduo* . 300

XXVI. Neolithic Implements in Ashanti . . . 322

APPENDIX. Note on the Measurements of the Ashanti made by Capt. Rattray. By Dudley Buxton, M.A. 332

INDEX 336

MAP . . . . . *to face Title*

Pedigree of Kakari . . . . . *at end*

NOTE

As the interest of this volume is primarily anthropological I have deliberately avoided the use of diacritical marks on words in the vernacular.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

A temple and priest of 'Nyame, the god of the sky . . *Frontispiece*

FIGURE

1. Lake Bosomtwe looking south . . . . . *To face page* 52
2. About to sacrifice a white fowl upon the Abrodwum stone . . . . . ,, 52
3. The Abrodwum stone near Lake Bosomtwe . . ,, 53
4. On the lake shore just before the white fowl was cast into the water . . . . . ,, 53
5. The whitefowl floating on the lake . . . . ,, 60
6. The making of the raft . . . . . ,, 60
7. The raft at the landing-place at Abrodwum . . ,, 61
8. Showing various positions on *mpadua* . . . ,, 61
9. Showing various positions on *mpadua* . . . ,, 62
10. Villagers on *mpadua* turning out to meet our raft . ,, 62
11. Two young scouts dashing off to announce our arrival at a village . . . . . ,, 63
12. On the lake: note the great tree top showing above the water . . . . . ,, 63
13. Showing method of propelling the raft: a tractor . ,, 64
14. Propelling the raft from the stern . . . . ,, 64
15. The fishermen having dived and picked up the bottom of the net are about to work their way along to the pocket at the end . . . . . *After fig.* 14
16. Working along to the pocket . . . . . *After fig.* 14
17. Nearing the pocket . . . . . *After fig.* 14
18. Unlacing the pocket . . . . . *After fig.* 14
19. The catch: note the wooden bowl . . . . *To face page* 65
20. Drummers at an *Adae* ceremony . . . . ,, 94
21. Drummers at an *Adae* ceremony . . . . ,, 94
22. Elephant horn blowers at an *Adae* ceremony . . ,, 95
23. Scene at an *Adae* ceremony . . . . . ,, 95
24. The blood being collected in a wooden bowl . . ,, 96
25. Threading the meat on wooden skewers . . . ,, 96
26. The meat on the skewers being carried into the stool house . . . . . ,, 97
27. Twins who were present at the *Adae* . . . ,, 97
28. Greeting the spirits of ancestors at an *Adae* . . ,, 110
29. The sacrifice—held on the shoulder of an attendant . ,, 110
30. The scene in the court-yard . . . . . ,, 112
31. The sacrifice being cut up . . . . . ,, 112

FIGURE		To face page
32.	The stool-carriers smearing the blood of the sacrifice upon the stools	113
33.	The chief pouring out a libation in front of the central stool	113
34.	The spirits are left to eat and drink	114
35.	The guardian of the blackened stools	114
36.	Preceded by the chief's 'white' stool	116
37.	The two 'linguists' drinking wine after the ceremony in the stool house	118
38.	The altar and shrine of Ta Kese	118
39.	Setting out for the sacred grove	124
40.	The approach to the sacred grove	124
41.	Kobina Wusu	125
42.	The chief pouring out the wine into the pots	125
43.	The trees at the sacred grove being dressed in white calico	128
44.	At the ceremony	128
45.	. . . led by his sandal bearers . . .	133
46.	A sheep was now carried forward to where the men were mixing the earth and water	133
47.	The chief smearing the red clay upon his subjects	134
48.	Rum was served out	134
49.	He danced in person, holding a rifle in his hand	135
50.	To-day is *Fodwo* . . . spirits of our ancestors come and eat rice	138
51.	The Queen Mother of Nsoko	138
52.	*'Nyame dua*, altar to the Sky God	143
53.	The *Apo* ceremony at Tekiman	154
54.	The *Apo* ceremony at Tekiman	154
55.	A shrine under an umbrella	155
56.	The gods taking the air	155
57.	Priestesses resting upon *afona* (iron swords) after dancing	158
58.	Priestesses dancing with cow-tail switches in their hands	158
59.	A priest in kilt made of palm-leaf fibre	*After fig.* 58
60.	A priest walking round shaking hands during an interval	
61.	A shrine on a stool just about to be carried out to join the other gods	
62.	One of the priests carried on a man's shoulders.	
63.	The head priestess and her companions went and sat down under their great umbrellas	*To face page* 159
64.	The priest . . . of Kum Aduasia impersonated a leopard	159
65.	The executioner	161
66.	The head priestess . . . appeared to be in a trance	161
67.	He then began to dance to the accompaniment of drums and singing	162

FIGURE		To face page
68.	The priest dancing, gazing into a mirror	162
69.	They danced holding two little wooden dolls	163
70.	Some priests who attended the *Apo* ceremony	163
71.	The highest shrine is that of Ta Kese	164
72.	The shrines of the lesser gods were ranged all round the walls.	164
73.	Brong girls at the *Apo* ceremony	172
74.	The outside of Ta Kora's temple at Tano Oboase	173
75.	The mural designs on the wall of Ta Kora's temple	173
76.	Inside the court-yard of the temple	174
77.	The shrine and altar of Ta Kora	174
78.	The old 'red' priest leaning forward towards the god	176
79.	Ame Yao's cave	176
80.	Temple to Ntoa near Tano Oboase	188
81.	A modern adaptation of a similar temple at Nkoranza	188
82.	We came to the base of the rocks	192
83.	Bosomtwe rocks	192
84.	The interior of Ame Yao's cave	193
85.	Bokoro, the king's seat	193
86.	The source of the mighty Tano river	196
87.	The white man says he has come to give you a morning greeting	197
88.	An altar . . . on the Tano near Kuntunso	197
89.	The platform or altar in the background has set upon it the shrine of Asubonten	204
90.	The sacrifice of a white fowl to Asubonten	204
91.	The priest . . . singing 'Father, I am miserable'	205
92.	The whitewash was mixed by some very old women	206
93.	The work was done by women to the accompaniment of songs and rattles	206
94.	The work was superintended by the chief priestess	207
95.	The chief priestess walking beside another priestess who is carrying a shrine	207
96.	The *Afahye* ceremony: the shrines of the gods returning from the water	210
97.	The escort to a shrine	210
98.	Escorted back to the village amid firing of guns	211
99.	The shrines, one by one, were taken into the stool house	211
100.	Here were arranged in two rows eleven little enamel bowls	222
101.	*Ntumpane* (talking drums)	242
102.	Talking drums	242
103.	The desecration of the Golden Stool. Kojo Danso before the tribunal	288
104.	The accused awaiting the verdict	288
105.	The scene outside the fort at Coomassie	294
106.	The Silver Stool of the Queen Mother of Mampon	295
107.	The consecration of the Princess Mary's Silver Stool	298

FIGURE	
108. Supreme Being upon whom men lean and do not fall	*To face page* 298
109. The Queen Mother showing her daughter what to do.	,, 300
110. The Stool was carried under an umbrella . . .	,, 300
111. The shrine of Ta Yao	,, 304
112. The scales (*nsenia*) and scoop	,, 304
113. Spoons . . . and boxes	*After fig.* 112
114–124. Ashanti weights	
125. Some 'Proverb' weights	*To face page* 310
126. 'Proverb' weights	,, 310
127. Ashanti weights	,, 311
128. Metal vessels (*kuduo*)	,, 311
129–30. Metal vessels (*kuduo*)	,, 314
131–5. Metal vessels (*kuduo*)	*After fig.* 130
136. *Kuduo* in street at Kokofu	
137. A metal bowl with inscription in Arabic . . .	
138. *Kuduo*	
139. *Kuduo*	*Page* 314
140. Showing some fragments of *nsemua* (tuyers) and celts	*To face page* 324
141. Showing several long celts	,, 324
142. Showing three long celts	,, 328
143. Showing one long celt	,, 328

I

THE ASHANTI CLASSIFICATORY SYSTEM[1]

It is an axiom in anthropology that without a clear knowledge of the family organization of a tribe it is impossible fully to understand their social organizations. Therefore at the outset of my investigations into the Anthropology of Ashanti, I decided to give full consideration to this important question.

Before commencing the analysis of the data contained in Tables I and II, a few brief explanatory notes will be given touching the methods adopted by anthropologists for the elucidation of this problem. It will be seen that the chart is called 'Ashanti Classificatory System'. The term 'Classificatory' is used in contradistinction to the term 'Family'[2] (sometimes called 'Descriptive'). The latter is the term we would apply to our own system of naming relatives. The essential basis of the Classificatory System is that it is founded on the clan or other social group larger than the family upon which our own 'descriptive' system is based.[3]

The next point to be touched upon is the method employed in collecting the essential data,—data without which the results of their system, so constantly present before our eyes but so little understood, can never be fully grasped. This method is known as the genealogical method.

This procedure, which was first successfully worked out by the late Dr. Rivers, and has been elaborated by Mrs. Seligman, is absolutely indispensable if any successful results are to be obtained. Briefly the method consists in securing the services of an elderly intelligent informant who is asked to give his

[1] With pedigree chart.

[2] See *Kinship and Social Organization* (Rivers).

[3] It can of course be readily argued that our own Descriptive system is in some degree classificatory, e. g. 'uncle' is applied to all brothers of father or mother, while 'cousin' is used to denote an even wider circle. The word Classificatory is used in these tables in a far wider sense. (We are all in Ashanti familiar with the apparent confusion resulting from the indiscriminate and unscientific use of the word 'brother', which word need not necessarily denote only a male child by the same father or mother as the speaker.)

genealogy.[1] More than one genealogy should of course be taken to avoid the possible chance of some double relationship : thus, in table No. I, Kakari gave the relationship name for his father's sister's husband as *wofa*, which stands for 'maternal uncle', but it was soon discovered that this was only because his uncle had married the woman in question ; in the ordinary way the man would be *agya* (father) ; this point is mentioned to show one of many possible pitfalls.

Having secured the actual names of the individuals in the family tree, it is not difficult to find out what relationship term, with, in each case, its reciprocal, is used by them when speaking of each other.

So much for a brief note of method ; for a fuller account those interested should consult *Notes and Queries on Anthropology*, especially pp. 149–56, published by the Royal Anthropological Institute.

To come now to an analysis and examination of the tables themselves. They contain a mass of details which have bearing on :

1. Relationship Terms.
2. Clans, kinship or blood.
3. Descent.
4. Succession to Stools.
5. Inheritance of Property.
6. Marriages (Enjoined, Privileged, and Prohibited).
7. *Ntoro*, patrilineal exogamous divisions.

At the present stage of these investigations, which have so far extended only over a comparatively short period, it is obviously impossible to write exhaustively on any of these subjects. In anthropology there is no single subject which the student can take up and say, 'I am going to study this to the exclusion of all else', for among primitive peoples there is hardly an art, a rite, a custom, or belief that is not bound up or connected in some way with some separate art, rite, custom, or belief.

This chapter is therefore necessarily incomplete, and other

[1] Pedigree Tables are illustrated in *Man*, April 1921, with an excellent article on the methods, by Mrs. Seligman.

facts may appear later, which may alter or modify the conclusions arrived at. I nevertheless venture to present it in its present form as I think it will show that, by the use of scientific methods, the anthropologist is capable of throwing new light in a comparatively short time on problems which have remained obscure in these parts for over two centuries, and because I hope that my account may stimulate further investigations by my colleagues.

It may be as well here to recapitulate very briefly such knowledge as we already possess on this subject.

I believe I am correct in stating that no even approximately complete list of relationship terms has ever been drawn up for the Ashanti. This perhaps is not surprising when such an authority as Dr. Seligman, F.R.S., wrote a few years ago, speaking of this subject: ' I doubt if a dozen have been recorded in all Africa, and these are certainly not complete.' In my *Ashanti Proverbs*, I attempted to give a few terms, but that list is not by any means a full one. Christaller's monumental work, *A Dictionary of the Ashanti and Fanti Languages*, contains (in alphabetical order) the words for many of these terms, but without reference to each other, and not in a complete form. I shall therefore come to the present tables and the accompanying chart, I and II, in which the system will be examined. ' A ', Kakari, is the central figure, and each term is given in relation to himself, with its reciprocal. The tables will be examined generation by generation, commencing with Kakari's own, then taking his ascendants, generation by generation, then descendants in like manner. The pedigree of Kakari has been enlarged and amplified from other pedigrees to fill up gaps (caused by death, omissions or other causes). The persons' actual names are given in round brackets thus, (Kakari), the relationship term is then given in English, with, immediately under that, the Ashanti. The *abusua*, or blood, is shown, where known, by various patterns, where not known, the circles are left blank. The *ntoro* exogamous divisions are purely fictitious, and various other signs over the *abusua* symbols have been used to illustrate these. The sign = signifies ' marries '. The circles with the arrow upwards thus, ♂, signify males, and downwards thus, ♀, females.

TABLE I

A. ' A's ', KAKARI'S, GENERATION

English.		Ashanti.	
Term.	*Reciprocal.*	*Term.*	*Reciprocal.*
Husband	Wife	*'Kunu ; ku'*	*'Yere ; ye'*
Elder brother	Younger brother	*'Nua panyin* [1]	*'Nua kuma*
Elder sister	Younger brother	*'Nua panyin*	*'Nua kuma*
Elder brother's wife	Husband's younger brother	*Akonta*	*Akonta*
Younger brother's wife	Husband's elder brother	*'Yere kuma* (or *akonta*)	*'Kunu panyin* (or *akonta*)
Elder sister's husband	Wife's younger brother	*Akonta*	*Akonta*
Younger sister's husband	Wife's elder brother	*Akonta*	*Akonta*

This completes ' A's ' own brothers and sisters, and their spouses, and we come next to ' A's ' father's brother's and father's sister's children, and ' A's ' mother's brother's and his mother's sister's children.

Father's brother's son	Father's brother's son	*'Nua kuma*, or *agya 'ba*	*'Nua panyin*, or *agya 'ba*
Father's brother's son's wife	Husband's father's brother's son	*'Yere kuma*	*'Kunu panyin*
Father's brother's daughter	Father's brother's son	*Agya 'ba*, or *'nua kuma*	*Agya 'ba*, or *'nua kuma*
Father's brother's daughter's husband	Wife's father's brother's son	*Akonta*	*Akonta*
Father's sister's son	Mother's brother's son	*Agya wofase, sewa 'ba, akonta*, or *'nua kuma*	*Wofa 'ba*, or *akonta*, or *'nua panyin*
Father's sister's son's wife	Husband's mother's brother's son	*'Yere kuma*, or *akonta*	*'Kunu panyin*, or *akonta*
Father's sister's daughter	Mother's brother's son	*Sewa 'ba*, or *'yere*	*'Kunu*
Father's sister's daughter's husband	Wife's mother's brother's son	*Akonta*	*Akonta*

[1] The sex descriptive terms *oba, obarima* are in these tables generally omitted.

English.		Ashanti.	
Term.	*Reciprocal.*	*Term.*	*Reciprocal.*
Mother's brother's son	Father's sister's son	*Wofa 'ba, akonta,* or *'nua*	*Agya wofase, sewa 'ba, akonta,* or *'nua*
Mother's brother's son's wife	Husband's father's sister's son	*Akonta,* or *'yere kuma*	*Akonta,* or *'kunu panyin*
Mother's brother's daughter	Father's sister's son	*Wofa 'ba,* or *'yere,* or *ase*	*Agya wofase 'kunu,* or *ase*
Mother's brother's daughter's husband	Wife's father's sister's son	*Akonta*	*Akonta*
Mother's sister's son	Mother's sister's son	*'Nua (kuma)*	*'Nua (panyin)*
Mother's sister's son's wife	Husband's mother's sister's son	*'Yere*	*'Kunu*
Mother's sister's daughter	Mother's sister's son	*'Nua*	*'Nua*
Mother's sister's daughter's husband	Wife's mother's sister's son	*Akonta*	*Akonta*

This completes 'A's ' generation.

B. GENERATION (I) OF ASCENDANTS

English.		Ashanti.	
Term.	*Reciprocal.*	*Term.*	*Reciprocal.*
Father	Son	*Agya, osie*	*'Ba*
Father's brother	Brother's son	*Agya*	*'Ba*
Father's brother's wife	Husband's brother's son	*Ena*	*'Ba*
Father's sister	Brother's son	*Sewa,* or *ase*	*'Ba ('nua 'ba),* or *ase*
Father's sister's husband	Wife's brother's son	*Agya*	*'Ba*
Mother	Son	*Ena, 'eno*	*'Ba*
Mother's brother	Sister's son (m.s.) [1]	*Wofa*	*Wofase*
Mother's brother's wife	Husband's sister's son	*Ase*	*Ase*
Mother's sister	Sister's son (w.s.)	*Ena*	*'Ba*
Mother's sister's husband	Wife's sister's son	*Agya (kuma)*	*'Ba, 'nua 'ba*

This completes first generation of ascendants.

[1] m.s. = man speaking ; w.s. = woman speaking.

C. GENERATION (II) OF ASCENDANTS

English.		Ashanti.	
Term.	*Reciprocal.*	*Term.*	*Reciprocal.*
Father's father	Son's son	*Nana*	*Nana*
Father's father's brother	Brother's son's son	*Nana*	*Nana*
Father's mother	Son's son	*Nana*	*Nana*
Father's father's brother's wife	Husband's brother's son's son	*Nana*	*Nana*
Father's father's sister	Brother's son's son	*Nana*	*Nana*
Father's father's sister's husband	Wife's brother's son's son	*Nana*	*Nana*
Mother's mother	Daughter's son	*Nana*	*Nana*
Mother's father	Daughter's son	*Nana*	*Nana*
Mother's mother's brother	Sister's daughter's son	*Nana*	*Nana*
Mother's mother's brother's wife	Husband's sister's daughter's child	*Nana*	*Nana*
Mother's mother's sister	Sister's daughter's child	*Nana*	*Nana*
Mother's mother's sister's husband	Wife's sister's daughter's son	*Nana*	*Nana*

This completes generation of ascendants.

FIRST GENERATION OF DESCENDANTS

D. DESCENDANTS (I)

English.		Ashanti.	
Term.	*Reciprocal.*	*Term.*	*Reciprocal.*
Son	Father	*'Ba*	*Agya*
Daughter	Father	*'Ba (oba)*	*Agya*
Son's wife	Husband's father	*Ase*	*Ase*
Daughter's husband	Wife's father	*Ase*	*Ase*
Elder brother's son	Father's younger brother	*'Nua panyin 'ba*	*Agya ('nua kuma)*
Elder brother's son's wife	Husband's father's younger brother	*Ase*	*Ase*

Elder brother's daughter	Father's younger brother	*'Nua panyin 'ba (oba)*	*Agya ('nua kuma)*
Elder brother's daughter's husband	Wife's father's younger brother	*Ase*	*Ase*
Younger brother's son	Father's elder brother	*'Nua kuma 'ba*	*Agya ('nua panyin)*
Younger brother's son's wife	Husband's father's elder brother	*Ase*	*Ase*
Younger brother's daughter	Father's elder brother	*'Nua kuma 'ba*	*(Agya 'nua panyin)*
Younger brother's daughter's husband	Wife's father's elder brother	*Ase*	*Ase*
Younger sister's son	Mother's elder brother	*Wofase*	*Wofa* (m.s.)
Younger sister's daughter	Mother's elder brother	*Wofase (oba)*	*Wofa* (m.s.)
Sister's son's wife	Husband's mother's brother	*Ase*	*Ase*
Sister's daughter's husband	Wife's mother's brother	*Ase*	*Ase*
Mother's sister's daughter's son	Mother's mother's sister's son	*Wofase*	*Wofa*
Mother's sister's daughter's daughter	Mother's mother's sister's son	*Wofase*	*Wofa*
Mother's sister's daughter's son's wife	Husband's mother's mother's sister's son	*Ase*	*Ase*
Mother's sister's daughter's daughter's husband	Wife's mother's mother's sister's son	*Ase*	*Ase*
Mother's brother's son's son	Father's father's sister's son	*'Ba*	*Agya*
Mother's brother's son's daughter	Father's father's sister's son	*'Ba*	*Agya*
Mother's brother's daughter's son	Mother's father's sister's son	*'Ba, wofase*	*Agya, wofa*
Mother's brother's daughter's daughter	Mother's father's sister's son	*'Yere 'ba, wofase*	*'Kunu, agya, wofa*
Mother's brother's son's son's wife	Husband's father's father's sister's son	*Ase*	*Ase*
Mother's brother's son's daughter's husband	Wife's father's father's sister's son	*Ase*	*Ase*
Mother's brother's daughter's son's wife	Husband's mother's father's sister's son	*Ase*	*Ase*
Mother's brother's daughter's daughter's husband	Wife's mother's father's sister's son	*Ase*	*Ase*

(For E: Second Generation of Descendants, see p. 33 and Chart.)

F. THIRD GENERATION OF DESCENDANTS FROM 'A'

English.		Ashanti.	
Term.	*Reciprocal.*	*Term.*	*Reciprocal.*
Son's son's son	Father's father's father	*Nana n'ka'so*	*Nana (panyin)*
Son's son's daughter	Father's father's father	*Nana n'ka'so*	*Nana (panyin)*
Daughter's daughter's son	Mother's mother's father	*Nana n'ka'so*	*Nana (panyin)*
Daughter's daughter's daughter	Mother's mother's father	*Nana n'ka'so*	*Nana (panyin)*
&c., &c., &c., all of this generation being	. . . . .	*Nana n'ka'so*	*Nana (panyin)*

TABLE II

GENEALOGY OF YA GYANSUA ('A's' WIFE)

English		Ashanti.	
Term.	*Reciprocal.*	*Term.*	*Reciprocal.*
A. *Wife's Generation :*			
Wife's brother	Sister's husband	*Akonta*	*Akonta*
Wife's brother's wife	Husband's sister's husband	*Ase*	*Ase*
Wife's sister	Sister's husband	*'Yere* (*kuma*), or *akonta*	*'Kunu* or *akonta*
B. *First Generation of Ascendants :*			
Wife's father	Daughter's husband	*Ase*	*Ase*
Wife's mother	Daughter's husband	*Ase*	*Ase*
C. *First Generation of Descendants :*			
Wife's brother's son	Father's sister's husband	*Akonta 'ba*	*Agya*
Wife's brother's daughter	Father's sister's husband	*Akonta 'ba*, or *ase*	*Agya* or *ase*
Wife's sister's son	Mother's sister's husband	*'Yere 'ba*	*Agya*
Wife's sister's son's wife	Husband's mother's sister's husband	*Ase*	*Ase*
Wife's sister's daughter	Mother's sister's husband	*'Yere 'ba*	*Agya*
Wife's sister's daughter's husband	Wife's mother's sister's husband	*Ase*	*Ase*

Each of these generations will now be examined in detail and the points of especial importance noted. A mere list of relationship terms without an explanation of their meaning can only be of minor value.

(A) It will be noted that 'in-laws' in this generation are classed as *akonta* (sometimes heard *akontagye*), with one noticeable exception, i.e. the wife of a younger brother, who is called by Kakari *'yere kuma* (lit. small or secondary wife), with reciprocal *'kunu panyin*, i.e. 'big or elder husband', and the reason for this curious nomenclature will be clear later when, in the law of inheritance, it comes to be noted that an elder brother, when succeeding to a younger brother's property on the latter's death, inherits his wife as forming part of the heritable property. This potential marriage right gives him, even during his younger brother's life-time, the privilege of addressing his younger brother's wife as his 'younger wife'. This, however, gives the elder brother no right of access whatever during the husband's life-time.

Next it is to be noted that all the father's brother's sons and daughters are called *'nua kuma*,[1] i.e. 'small or secondary brothers', or *agya 'ba*, i.e. 'father's child'; 'father' here referring, not to the speaker's own father, but to his father's brothers, whom 'A' also calls 'father'.

To an Ashanti the words *agya 'ba*[2] (i.e. father's child) implies that a child of his father's brother is meant; and at once stamps that child, if a female, as being in a prohibited degree of marriage with the speaker for the reason to be given later when discussing the *ntoro* relationship.

Dealing now with the spouses of these persons we have the father's brother's son's wife called *'yere kuma*, i.e. 'small wife', because her husband is called by 'A' his, 'A's', 'small brother' (there is no right of access or marriage, however), or sometimes *akonta* (i. e. sister-in-law). The father's brother's daughter's

[1] *'Nua kuma* (i. e. younger or secondary brother or sister) is also used for any of the following persons: (*a*) Own younger brother; (*b*) own younger sister; (*c*) father's sister's son; (*d*) mother's sister's son; (*e*) mother's sister's daughter; (*f*) mother's brother's son. The females among all these, as will be noted later, may not marry 'A'.

[2] *Agya 'ba* is used in an even wider sense implying the child of any man of the speaker's *ntoro*.

husband is also *akonta*. The mother's sister's son's wife is called by 'A' *'yere* (*kuma*), i. e. 'small wife'; because 'A' in certain circumstances can claim her as his property on the death of her husband. He has no right of access to her, however, during her husband's life-time. The mother's sister's daughter's husband is *akonta*.

The sons and daughters (and their spouses) of 'A's' father's sisters and 'A's' mother's brothers have terms (among others) derived through their parents, i. e. the father's sisters and mother's brothers. These paternal aunts and maternal uncles have special terms due to the very especial position they hold, while the father's brothers and the mother's sisters are all indiscriminately classed as *agya* (father) and *ena* (mother) respectively. The father's sister's son is called *sewa 'ba*, i. e. paternal aunt's son, and the mother's brother's son is called *wofa 'ba*, i. e. maternal uncle's son. The father's sister's son is also called *agya wofase* and *'nua kuma* (small brother), with reciprocal *wofa 'ba* (maternal uncle's child), and also sometimes *akonta*, i. e. brother-in-law.[1]

In referring to this alternative term *akonta* (brother-in-law) given by 'A' to his father's sister's son, an interesting fact is disclosed. We find that 'A' calls this man's sister, i. e. his father's sister's daughter, *'yere*, i. e. 'wife'. Now it will be found on investigation that 'A' has an absolute and undisputed right of access to or marriage with this woman. So strong is this feeling that 'A' naturally calls her brother his *akonta*, i.e. brother-in-law, though he may be only potentially so. An exactly similar position exists on the mother's side, where 'A' is the potential husband and has right of access to (provided she is not, with 'A's' permission, another man's wife) the daughter of his mother's brother, whom 'A' in consequence may call *'yere* (wife),

[1] It will be well here to draw attention to the almost universal misconception (due to that constant source of misinformation in West Africa, i. e. the faulty rendering by interpreters whose knowledge of English is imperfect), that 'uncle' or 'aunt' may equally refer to the maternal or paternal side; whereas in Ashanti the equivalents of our 'paternal uncle' and our 'maternal aunt' do not exist; and 'maternal aunts' and 'paternal uncles' are all classed as 'mothers' and 'fathers'. In contradistinction, certain relationships are singled out for distinct and separate names because of their importance in the family organization, this being a normal feature of the classificatory system.

with reciprocal *'kunu* (husband), at the same time calling *her* brother *akonta*, i.e. brother-in-law.[1] Both these marriages are called Cross-Cousin Marriages.

Next we come to the wives of the father's sister's son and the mother's brother's son; both are called by 'A' *'yere kuma* (small or secondary wife), or sometimes *akonta*. The reason 'A' calls these women his 'small wives' is that the husband in each case stands to 'A' in the relationship of *'nua*, i. e. brother, hence, as in the case of 'A's' younger brothers, he calls their wives his wives; the name in these cases, however, being only a sort of courtesy title and implying (at the present date at any rate) no rights over them.

(B) *First generation of 'A's' ascendants.* It has already been noted that all 'A's' father's brothers are called by 'A' *agya* (father), and all his mother's sisters are called *ena* (mother), while his father's sisters are called by the special name *sewa*, and the mother's brothers by the special name *wofa*; reciprocals respectively *'ba* (child) and *wofase* (sister's child).

'A's' mother's brother's wife is called *ase*; now *ase* is used of 'in-laws' (fathers, mothers, &c.), and its use here would appear extraordinary, had it not already been pointed out that 'A' has the right of access to and marriage with his mother's brother's daughter; hence his mother's brother's wife is his potential mother-in-law and the terminology at once becomes logical and the meaning clear. The mother's sister's husband and the father's sister's husband are *agya*, reciprocal *'ba*. The father's brother's wife is *ena*, reciprocal *'ba*.

(C) *Generation (ii) of ascendants.* All are classed, without exception, as *nana*.

(D) *First generation of 'A's' descendants.* All the sons- and daughters-in-law are *ase*, with reciprocal *ase*. The brother's sons and brother's daughters are all classed as *'nua mma*, i.e. simply brother's children. The brother's son's wives and the brother's daughter's husbands are all *ase*, as are the sister's son's wives. When we come to the sister's sons, however, we again have the

[1] If 'A' does not marry these women but permits them to marry some one else, he then has the right to marry their daughters whom he will call from birth *me yere* (my wife), and the mother who was first of all his potential wife becomes his potential mother-in-law and is actually so called, i. e. *ase*.

important and distinct terms, i. e. *wofase*, with reciprocal *wofa*—when the man is speaking; when a woman is speaking the sister's son is simply *'ba* (child).

Coming to the mother's sister's children's children, and the mother's brother's children's children (not shown on the chart), we find that the mother's sister's daughter's sons and daughters are called by 'A' *wofase*, with reciprocal *wofa*, and their spouses are called *ase*. The mother's sister's son's children and the mother's brother's son's children are to 'A' simply *mma* (sing. *'ba*), i. e. his children, and they call 'A' *agya*, father (adding name, e. g. Kakari).

When we come to the children of the mother's brother's daughter we have apparently a most baffling and complicated terminology, for we are told by one that of these, the daughter is called by 'A' *'yere* (wife), with reciprocal *'kunu* (husband); by another that 'A' would call this woman *me 'ba* (my child); and by a third that she would stand to 'A' in the relationship of *wofase* (sister's daughter).

What complicates the matter still more is that the inquirer will find that in actual practice one and all of these relationships will be found to exist in different families, and he will be informed in each case it is the normal and proper relationship according to the native customary law.

The son of 'A's' mother's brother's daughter we also will find stated may stand to 'A' either in the relationship of actual 'son', or that of *wofase* (sister's son). This is the kind of problem that causes the casual inquirer to despair, or go away believing that no order or settled design underlies native institutions, which he will suppose are subject to mere caprice, instead of, as is really the case, being ordained by rigid and well-defined laws, which fit one into another in the social organization and seldom seem to clash.

The following explanation will, I trust, make the matter clearer. The mother's brother's daughter's children may, we found, stand in any of the following relations to 'A', i. e. they may be:

(*a*) His own children.

(*b*) (In case of a daughter) his wife.

(*c*) His *wofase* (i.e. his sister's sons).

(*a*) 'A's' own children: we have seen that 'A' has an undisputed right of access to and marriage with his mother's brother's daughter. If, then, he marries this woman her children will be his children, hence those who state that this relationship exists between 'A' and the potential children of a mother's brother's daughter are stating a fact which is based on native custom.

(*b*) Again, we have seen that should 'A' not exercise his privilege to marry his mother's brother's daughter, he will then still have the right to marry her daughter; if he does so, she then becomes his wife.

(*c*) Supposing again that 'A', by agreement, gives up his prior right to this daughter of his mother's brother's daughter, as he did already to her mother, she, i. e. the mother's brother's daughter's daughter becomes known by 'A' as his *wofase*, i. e. 'sister's child', because her mother is now called by 'A' his *'nua*, 'sister'.

A universally-known Ashanti saying, which runs, '*Se w'anya wo wofa 'ba ana wose wofase anware a, wo 'nua ne no*' ('If you did not get your mother's brother's child or your father's sister's child to marry, she is your own sister'), shows the whole aspect of the case as viewed by an Ashanti.

The above also explain the double terminology given for the mother's brother's daughter's son, who may be 'A's' own child or his *wofase*, i. e. sister's child.

It must be clearly understood that the courtesy title of *wofase* in this case implies no 'blood' tie with 'A', and is really a fictitious relationship carrying with it none of the privileges of the blood-related *wofase* as to succession to property and stool.[1]

Everything that has been written above concerning the mother's brother's daughter's daughter applies with equal force to the father's sister's daughter's daughter, who may be 'A's' 'own child', 'own wife', or 'sister's child', i. e. *wofase*.

The children of 'A's' father's brother's children's children are all *mma* (children), reciprocal *agya* (father).

(E) *Second generation of 'A's' descendants.* All the persons in this generation are classed as *nana* and their spouses *ase* (in-laws).

[1] This point might be of great importance in stool or succession cases and should be carefully noted.

(F) *Third generation of 'A's' descendants.* Here we have again an instructive term. All the persons in this generation are classed as *nana n'ka'so*, i. e. 'grandchild (&c.), don't touch (my) ear', with reciprocal *nana panyin* (old grandfather). The significance of this term will be dealt with later under the heading of *Prohibited Marriages.*

Table II (*Wife's pedigree*). In this table, which is incomplete, several points of interest should be noted.

The wife's sister is called by 'A' *'yere* (wife). This, as far as I can discover, does not (*now*) imply any right of access or marriage. In this connexion, however, it is of importance to note that in the case of chiefs, when a wife dies, the wife's family are expected to replace the deceased woman by giving her sister in marriage to the chief. Some potential right to a wife's sister in the past is further postulated by the name given to a wife's sister's husband; he is called by 'A' *kora* (reciprocal *kora*). Now *kora* is the word used also for a co-wife, and means literally 'the jealous one'.[1] Again we find that this woman's children (i. e. the wife's sister's children) are called by 'A' 'my wife's children'.

These facts are, I think, particularly suggestive.

The wife's brother's daughter is called *akonta 'ba*, i. e. brother-in-law's child, but there is an alternative title, *ase*, which here means 'daughter-in-law', and the reason given for this name is that one of 'A's' sons 'will probably marry this woman'. The whole question of 'arranged' marriages appears to me to be worthy of very close investigation.

This completes the 'relationships system' proper. Its classificatory character can be seen very clearly. In itself such a list is of considerable value and interest, but passing on to its application, its importance in getting anything like a full grasp of Ashanti social organizations, will come even more fully to be realized.

2. *Clans* (*Abusua*). It was already known that the Ashanti were divided into exogamous clans. Bowdich noted this fact more than a hundred years ago, while Christaller writes: 'The principle of the division into families is descendance from the

[1] Mrs. Seligman tells me that among some of the Nilotic tribes the word for co-wife is also derived from a root meaning jealous.

same mother, or relation from the mother's side, which relation also determines the right of inheritance among the genuine Tshi Tribes.' [1] Bosman, writing in 1700, also notes the same system.

It is not intended, in this chapter, to enter into a full account of these clans, their number, names, origin, &c. They are only dealt with here in relation to their bearing on the subject under discussion.

In Table I of the chart, seven clans are dealt with, all of which are actually the clans of the persons named in that genealogy.

The first important rule to note is that these clans (*abusua*) are *exogamous*, that is, a person of one clan can under no possible circumstances marry or have sexual intercourse with any one who belongs to his or her clan. Infringement of this law was punished by death, or expulsion from the clan, for both parties concerned.[2]

The second is that descent is matrilineal, i. e. a man or woman belongs to the clan not of the father but of the mother. These clans are, in the chart, shown by distinctive patterns, which indicate at a glance how the clan persists as long as the direct *female* descendants last, but is immediately lost in the children of any *male*. This fact is the very basis of the Ashanti social organization, and once fully grasped and understood, explains most of their laws of inheritance, succession, and marriage, and accounts for the strangeness of these rules and of their relationship terminologies.

The Ashanti word for clan is *abusua*, and this word is synonymous with *mogya* (blood). There is a well-known proverb which runs *Abusua bako mogya bako*, ' one clan one blood '.

Bowdich wrote : ' This extraordinary rule of succession excluding all children but those of a sister is founded on the argument that *if the wives of the sons* are faithless the blood of the family is entirely lost in the offspring, but should the daughters deceive their husbands it is still preserved.'

A glance at the chart will show the complete fallacy of any such argument and prove how totally this subject has been misunderstood. Take a couple, say Kakari and his wife, Ya

[1] *Vide* also Sarbah, *Fanti Customary Laws*, pp. 3–5.

[2] Expulsion from the clan amounted to outlawry and was a very solemn proceeding.

Gyansua; the former is of the Ekuona clan, the latter (the woman) of the Beretuo clan. They have a child, i. e. son Kojo Nti, who is, according to Ashanti idea, of the mother's clan (Beretuo), i. e. he has his mother's blood. This we will suppose, for the sake of the argument, is the blood it is wished to preserve. This son now marries, but he is, by customary law, compelled to marry some one of a clan other than Beretuo. He marries a woman of the Asokore clan. Now, however virtuous his wife may be or if she be a hundred times unfaithful, matters not at all so far as keeping the Beretuo blood pure is concerned, for the woman's offspring can never be of the Beretuo clan; but if she married twenty men of every possible clan and bore twenty children, all would be her own blood, i. e. Asokore; because the men cannot transmit one drop of their blood to their children; on the other hand, a Beretuo woman would transmit her blood to her children, to be lost entirely in her son's offspring, to continue however in the female side, i. e. her daughter's granddaughters, &c., as long as the female line lasted.

I wish now, before passing on to the other headings (Inheritance, &c.), to refer to a most interesting point which I had not heard of before these investigations were entered upon. It is indeed briefly referred to in *Ashanti Proverbs*, but time and opportunity did not then allow of the matter being fully investigated. I refer to the *ntoro* divisions.[1] Christaller gives as a definition of this word, 'A person of the same ancient family worshipping the same fetish.'

It is the *ntoro* of the man mingling with the *mogya* of the woman that, the Ashanti believes, forms the child, and just as the woman transmits her *mogya* or blood, so the man transmits his *ntoro*. Thus each man and woman have in them two distinct elements—*mogya* (or blood) and *ntoro* (spirit); the former inherited from the mother and transmitted by her alone, and the latter received from the father and transmitted by him to his offspring. This, then, is the physiological aspect of conception as understood by the Ashanti.

The physical condition of women observed at child-birth and

[1] A fuller account of the *ntoro* is to be found in Chap. II, *Ntoro* Exogamous Divisions.

during their periods seem, logically enough, to have given rise to the supposition that 'blood' alone is transmitted by the woman, while conception following the man's efforts in the act of coition (the semen is actually sometimes called *ntoro*) have apparently given rise to the belief that the *ntoro* alone is transmitted by the male.

Just as the *abusua* is passed down the female line as long as there are female descendants to transmit it, so the *ntoro* is passed on through the male line as long as there are *males*, but is immediately lost as soon as it comes into the female line, for a female, while having the *ntoro* she derived from her male parent, is not able to transmit it to her children who will inherit a different *ntoro* from their father.

Sociologically the *ntoro* plays a less important part than the *abusua*, which decides the whole succession of property and stools, but it is none the less important. When we come to consider prohibited marriages we shall find that the *ntoro* accounts for otherwise inexplicable avoidances, and the rules of marriage group themselves into a clear and easily understood system governed by a few simple laws.

Prohibited Marriages.

An Ashanti may not marry :

1. His grandmother, grand-aunt (maternal),
2. His mother,
3. His sister,
4. His mother's sister, mother's sister's daughter, mother's sister's daughter's daughter,
5. His sister's daughter,
6. His daughter's daughter,
7. His daughter's daughter's daughter ; and he may not marry
8. His grandmother, grand-aunt (paternal),
9. His father's sister,
10. His father's brother's daughter, father's brother's son's daughter,
11. His granddaughter (son's daughter), and :
12. Any one of same *abusua*, whether really kindred or not.

Marriages Allowed.

1. Father's sister's daughter (not only allowed but privileged or enjoined).[1]
2. Mother's brother's daughter (not only allowed but enjoined).

Let us examine these in turn and find the laws governing them.

Prohibited marriages. Nos. 1–5, it will be noted, are easily explained. The rule governing them being this :

An *abusua* cannot marry the same *abusua*, or, in other words, clans are exogamous. This is simple enough and was of course already known.

But let us examine prohibitions 6–11 and we shall at once find that the above law cannot govern these, for in no case does the prohibited marriage infringe our rule, as in each example the clans or *abusua* are different.

Finally we come to the law that, while prohibiting a man's marriage with his father's brother's daughter (entailing no breaking of the rule as to the blood or clans), it actually enjoins a man's marriage with his father's sister's daughter.

The explanation lies in the facts that (1) the *ntoro* descends through the males, and (2) (like the *abusua*) is exogamous.

Applying this we find on examining our chart that the marriages prohibited in 9 and 10, though they do not infringe the law of the *abusua*, do infringe that of the *ntoro*, while the marriages permitted, i. e. that of sons and daughters of parents who are brother and sister, infringe neither.

Now it will be noted that there still remains one class of prohibited unions which neither the *ntoro* laws nor the *abusua* laws explain, e. g. the prohibition to marry, for example, one's daughter's daughter (No. 6) and one's paternal grandmother (No. 8). These women will belong to neither *abusua* nor *ntoro*.

On inquiring into the reason for this I was informed that no one would ever think of marrying any *nana*, grandchild, grandniece, &c., *ntoro* or no *ntoro*, *abusua* or no *abusua*, and on inquiring further ' what about a great-great-granddaughter ? '

[1] Without going fully into the question of these ' cross-cousin ' marriages, I would draw attention to the fact that where there is matrilineal descent coupled with exogamous divisions on a patrilineal basis (like the *ntoro*) such unions become the only possible ones in that generation, and are, I believe, entered upon in connexion with considerations of property and inheritance.

(No. 7), I was met with an exclamation of horror and the answer that, '*ye kyi no koko*', i. e. 'that is red taboo for us'; and this is further proved by the name for a great-grandchild, and all others in this generation which is *nana n'ka 'so*, i. e. 'grandchild don't touch my ear'—a touch of a great-grandchild, grandniece, &c., on the ear of the great-grandparent being said to cause the latter's speedy death.

In other words, we have apparently a taboo prohibiting any union of 'A' with either his second generation of ascendants or descendants.

I have elsewhere gone into the details of very great interest, in connexion with the *ntoro*, their classification, the taboos entailed by each, the days set aside for 'washing' (the question as to what *ntoro* a man or woman belongs is *Wo guare ntoro ben?* 'What *ntoro* do you wash?'), the giving of an *ntoro* to some one who has none, its bearing on the question of illegitimacy (an illegitimate child to an Ashanti is one who does not know the father's *ntoro*—an illegitimate child (by a free woman) will of course always have its mother's *abusua*, and hence may inherit almost equally with a legitimate child).

Before proceeding to the next heading—The rules of inheritance—I shall here recapitulate the three factors which govern unions and marriage prohibitions.

1. The clan (*abusua*) is always exogamous.
2. The *ntoro* (possibly) is always exogamous.
3. The prohibition ruling out all grandchildren in the classificatory sense.

Succession to Property and Stools

Much that has been said with reference to the laws of descent applies equally to the law of succession to property.

When these are properly understood it will be no longer necessary to learn the 'extraordinary'[1] fact that a son cannot ever succeed to his father's property, but that a mother might possibly do so, or again that half-truth that one hears every day—'that the nephew, i. e. the sister's son, succeeds'.

There are several proverbs, that have almost the force of legal axioms, which I shall quote here.

[1] *Vide* Bosman.

1. The first is *Oba di oba adie na obarima di obarima adie*, i. e. 'A woman inherits from a woman and a man from a man.' This axiom seems so well known among the Ashanti that it seems astonishing that such an important point is scarcely alluded to in any previous work. In Sarbah's *Customary Laws*,[1] where he gives the law of inheritance for the Fanti and Akan peoples, the only allusion that might have possible reference to this rule might be where he mentions, talking of inheritance, 'Provided always a man is invariably preferred to a woman', but Bosman I find briefly notes it in the extract I give later.

2. *Nuanom nsai a, wofase nni adi*, 'When one's brothers are not exhausted the sister's child does not inherit'. This saying again proves that the general idea that it is the sister's son who always succeeds is totally erroneous.

3. *Adehye nsai a akoa nni adie*, 'When the freemen (i. e. of the blood) are not finished the slave does not succeed', is yet another. I shall have more to say presently on the subject of the succession of so-called 'slaves' which one sees so often mentioned and all accounts of which appear to give such a wrong impression of what is the real custom.

The Ashanti laws of inheritance, from the days of Bosman and Bowdich—those astute observers into Ashanti customs and beliefs—have caused wonder but never seem to have been fully explained.[2]

'The property of the wife is distinct and independent of the husband,' writes Bowdich, and again, 'In the Fanti country the principal slave succeeds to the exclusion of the son, who only inherits his mother's property'; and again the paragraphs already quoted, 'the extraordinary rule of succession excluding all children but those of a sister', &c.

Again Bosman writes, 'The children they have by their wives are indeed legitimate, but all along the Gold Coast they never inherit their parents' effects (except at Accra only); the right of inheritance is very oddly adjusted, and as far as I could

[1] *Fanti Custòmary Laws*, by J. M. Sarbah. For some of the statements in this valuable work I have not always been able to find confirmation in Ashanti customary law, which in these cases may possibly differ from the Fanti.

[2] 'Their account of this subject is so perplexed and obscure that hitherto no European has been able to obtain a clear description of it, and I am certain they never will, notwithstanding that the negroes are as accurately perfect in it that they never commit any error on this head' (Bosman, p. 174).

observe the brothers' and sisters' children are the right and lawful heirs in the manner following. They do not jointly inherit, but the eldest son of his mother is heir to his mother's brother or her son as the eldest daughter is heiress of her mother's sister or her daughter.'

Bosman has, it will be seen, noted the law I mentioned above that lays down that 'a woman is heir to a woman and a man to a man'.

What he means by the brother's children succeeding, however, I cannot understand, for a brother's child is absolutely barred, as will be seen later.

Now all these statements as to the curious or 'extraordinary rules of succession', to quote old Bosman again, are really simple if we grasp the following rule which is the same as already seen governs the law of descent, i. e. That only a person (man or woman) of the *abusua* or blood can possibly be the heir to and inherit from some one of that *abusua* (as long as any of the blood remain).

A cursory glance at our chart will show that, taking again our central figure 'A', Kakari:

1. His children—sons and daughters—cannot possibly be his heirs.
2. Nor his brother's children.
3. Nor his father's brothers or sisters, nor his own father.
4. Neither his grandfather nor his grandfather's brothers and sisters.
5. Nor his maternal uncles' children.

The reason in all cases being that *none of these persons can ever be his Kakari's, abusua*, or blood. This simplifies matters greatly, for we are left with only a few possible successors, these being (so far as my investigations have led):

1. His mother's brother, i. e. his maternal uncle—the head of his family. He has an absolute and undisputed right to succeed[1] but would in practice very possibly, for reasons that will not be gone into here, waive his right in favour of:
2. Kakari's elder brother.

[1] I am not going into minute details as to all the various forms of property, i. e. family, ancestral, private, movable, and immovable, but am only dealing with such property as would in the ordinary course be subject to these laws of inheritance.

2*a*. Next brother in age and so on.

3. Kakari's mother's sister's son (*'nua*).

4. Kakari's own sister's son, i. e. the so often quoted ' sister's child ', who only now comes in, the *nuanom*, i. e. brothers, being finished.

Again, No. 4's descendants can never inherit as, being a man, his *abusua* ends with him, so the property again goes off to another line, i. e. :

5. The sister's daughter's son. Eldest and so on.

6. Mother's sister's daughter's son.

7. Mother's sister's daughter's daughter's son.

This, it will be seen, exhausts the whole of the possible male heirs, and it is now necessary to look round for female heirs. The first is :

8*a*. The eldest sister.

8*b*. The next eldest sister ; failing these :

9. The eldest sister's daughter, and so on.

10. Sister's daughter's daughter. All this line being now extinct the property goes to :

11. The mother's sisters, by seniority.

12. Mother's sister's daughter.

13. Mother's sister's daughter's daughter.

All relatives, i. e. *abusua*, being dead the property may be given to ' a slave ' ; the particular status of this slave will be explained later, but it is to be noted that this slave will inherit to the absolute exclusion of all those persons who according to our law would have had a legal claim to the property, i. e. Kakari's own children, brother's children, &c.

If a stool be inherited the heirs are the same to 7 ; these issue being extinct, a male of the same clan (not necessarily kindred) must be brought in from elsewhere, as neither a slave nor a woman may occupy a male stool.

Coming now to the inheritance of property from a deceased female, the heirs in order appear to be the following :

1. Deceased's mother (who will often waive her right in favour of) :

2. Deceased's sisters (by seniority).

3. Deceased's own daughters (by seniority).

4. Deceased's sisters' daughters.

5. Deceased's granddaughter.
6. Deceased's sister's daughter's daughter.
7. Deceased's mother's sister, who will probably give it to
8. Her own daughter.
9. Her own daughter's daughter. The female line being now extinct, the property would go to :
10. The male heirs in the order already given.
11. All heirs, male and female, being extinct the property will go to a female slave (*odonko 'ba oba*, i. e. the female child of a slave).

The heirs to a female stool are the same up to 9, then, as neither a slave nor a male can ever sit on a woman's stool, a successor will be sought from among the females bearing the deceased's clan name.

(In both the case of succession by males and females the order of the heirs is that which would hold good in the event of the property or stool descending in an even course. In practice an heir may be passed over, with the concurrence of the family, for various reasons.)

Coming now to the succession by slaves, the first point to note is that a slave, or rather, to use the correct name, ' a slave child ' (*odonko 'ba*), may never inherit a stool though he or she may inherit property.

Now it will be well here very briefly to examine exactly the status of an *odonko 'ba*.

It was the custom in Ashanti for male members of a clan to purchase female slaves by whom they had children. These children had of course no *abusua*[1] but had the father's *ntoro* just as a legitimate son or daughter.

The child of such a purchase and all her descendants were known as *odonko 'ba*. These persons lived and grew up with the family and were treated by them very much as members of that family, and of course looked upon the master's home as their domicile.

In the event therefore of the family becoming extinct, such a slave, who might possibly be the great-great-grandchild of the originally bought slave, was preferred as an heir to any member of the *ntoro* of the deceased who might possibly have been

[1] That is assuming they were slaves from the north.

allowed to succeed, but who, if he did, would go off to his own possibly distant home with the movable property, leaving the old ancestral family home and its spirits to be forgotten and neglected.

The *odonko 'ba* having no *abusua*, or in other words no other home, when he or she came into an inheritance, carried on the old master's home at the same spot, and the rites in honour of the departed spirits.

This I believe to be the true explanation of this curious custom.

The Ashanti man in the old times had always a horror of his family becoming extinct, and the purchase and rearing of *nnonko mma* was his insurance against this possible calamity. The *nnonko mma* would even in time come to regard their old master's family as their own, and when the real facts were obscured by time or forgotten, did actually claim clanship (*abusua*) with the family (now extinct) which had purchased his ancestors.

II

NTORO EXOGAMOUS DIVISIONS

I BELIEVE it to be correct to state that the full meaning of the word *ntoro*, as understood in Ashanti, has hitherto been little known to European ethnologists. Christaller briefly and somewhat ambiguously defines the term as 'a person of the same ancient family worshipping the same fetish'.

In the present chapter it is proposed to present the results of some investigations into this interesting subject. In the course of these researches a special visit was made to the fountain head or home of one of the *ntoro* divisions, Lake Bosomtwe, in order to examine on the spot anything which might throw further light upon the question. A fortnight's stay at the lake produced some interesting and important results, and I propose here to give also a full account of that very beautiful expanse of water, even though some aspects of these investigations may not seem to have a strict bearing upon a subject which is primarily anthropological. For our present purpose this chapter will therefore be divided into, and treated under, the following headings:

1. *Ntoro* divisions in general, their classification, taboos, totems, supposed origins, days of observance, ritual, &c.

2. Bosomtwe *ntoro*, *per se*, with its traditional history, myths, supposed etymology, rites in connexion with lake spirit, lake villages, present and submerged, reported phenomenon, report on soundings taken, the lake fisher-folk, with account of appliances used for fishing and boating, &c.

The word *ntoro* is a generic term covering all those exogamous divisions to one or another of which every Ashanti belongs. The term (so far as my present knowledge goes) is best translated by 'spirit'. It might almost be called familiar spirit.

The *ntoro*, the Ashanti thinks, is one of the two great elements in every man and woman. The other element is *bogya*, or blood, for which the general term is *abusua*. As has been noted

elsewhere,[1] the *abusua* or blood is passed on by and through the female and cannot be transmitted by the male. In an exactly similar manner, the *ntoro* is transmitted by and through the male and cannot be transmitted by the female.

The Ashanti believes that it is the male—transmitted *ntoro*, mingling with the blood in the female, which accounts for the physiological mysteries of conception. I have stated that *ntoro* may perhaps be translated by ' spirit '. Indeed, it appears to be used at times synonymously with *sunsum*, that spiritual element in a man or woman upon which depends—not life, i. e. breath, for that is the *okra* or *'kra*—but that force, personal magnetism, character, personality, power, soul, call it what you will, upon which depend health, wealth, worldly power, success in any venture, in fact everything that makes life at all worth living.[2]

Yet again it has been seen that *ntoro* is sometimes used for semen.

It has been seen in the previous chapter that certain unions which did not infringe the law which rules that ' like *abusua* may not marry into like *abusua* ' were nevertheless strictly prohibited because of the law which decrees that ' like *ntoro* may not mate with like *ntoro* '.

I propose now to give the different names for each *ntoro* division.

It will be noted that there are several well-defined characteristics of the *ntoro.*

(*a*) The special day set aside for ' the washing ' of the *ntoro.*

(*b*) A taboo or series of taboos in connexion with each *ntoro.*

(*c*) A totem and what may be ' associated totems ' or perhaps sub-totems, though this is by no means clear.

To discover to what *ntoro* a person belongs, he is asked, *Wo guare ntoro ben?* literally, ' What *ntoro* do you wash, or bathe ? ' the answer being, ' I wash such and such and such an *ntoro.*' The meaning attached to this expression will be fully described later on.

[1] The Ashanti Classificatory System, Chap. I; Matrilineal Descent in Ashanti, Chap. III.

[2] In the Chapter on ' The Golden Stool ' it will be seen that this emblem of national unity is also supposed by the Ashanti to contain the national *sunsum.*

NTORO EXOGAMOUS DIVISIONS ON A PATRILINEAL BASIS

Ashanti name.	*Day set aside for observance.*	*Totems or Taboos* (?).	*Remarks.*
1. Bosommuru (sometimes known by the sobriquet Asafodie or Adufodie)	Tuesday	1. Python 2. Ox, cow 3. Species of monkey called *kwakuo* 4. Dog 5. Wild dog 6. Species of bird called *asokwa* All these would not be killed or eaten. Besides these palm wine and Indian corn would not be drunk or eaten on a Tuesday	The Bosommuru is a river in Akyem. This is held to be the most important of all the *ntoro* divisions, partly no doubt owing to its having been the *ntoro* of no less than eight Ashanti Kings (Osai Tutu, Opoku Ware, Bonsu Panyin, Osai Kwame, Opoku Fofie, Osai Yao, Bonsu Kuma, Kakari (Kofi); and partly because the Ashanti think it was the first *ntoro* ever given to man. The nicknames given to this *ntoro* refer to the supposed looting propensities of its holders, due no doubt to their connexion with the royal house.
2. Bosompra	Wednesday	1. Leopard 2. White fowl 3. Species of yam called *afasie* 4. Bush buck 5. *Kwakuo* (species of monkey) 6. *Tamiriwa* (large edible snail) 7. Tortoise 8. *Aboka*, i.e. any animal found dead	A river rising in Ashanti and flowing into the sea near Shama.
3. Bosomtwe	Sunday	1. A species of monkey called *kwakuo* 2. The Bush buck (*nwansane*) 3. *Tamiriwa* (a species of edible snail) 4. Tortoise	A large lake in central Ashanti.
4. Bosommaram	Saturday	1. Palm wine (but may drink European spirits) 2. Cow	
5. Abankwadie	Sunday	1. Ox or cow 2. *Tamiriwa* (snail) 3. Tortoise	Derivation (doubtful) given by Ashanti as *abrane-koa-die*, i.e. that which pertains to a strong slave.

NTORO EXOGAMOUS DIVISIONS ON A PATRILINEAL BASIS—*contd.*

Ashanti name.	*Day set aside for observance.*	*Totems or Taboos* (?).	*Remarks.*
6. Agyinadie	Wednesday	1. Crocodile 2. *Afasie* (a species of yam)	Derivation (doubtful) given by Ashanti, *gyina-gye-adie*, stand and receive something.
7. Akankadie	Tuesday	1. *Abuburo* (dove) 2. Dog 3. Wild dog	Derivation given by Ashanti, *ka-kae-die*, i.e. remember what was told.
8. Agyimadie	Sunday	1. Bush buck 2. *Okankane* (serval) 3. *Tamiriwa* (snail) 4. Tortoise 5. Palm wine (on Sunday only)	
9. Nkansadie	?	?	

The above list comprises all the *ntoro* that have so far come under my notice, but very possibly does not exhaust the total number of these divisions, nor must my information be regarded as final.

It has been seen that the *ntoro* is considered as being instrumental in the conception of the embryo in the womb. A further proof that this is the belief is given in the following myth—a translation of an account in the vernacular—giving the origin of the first *ntoro* ever bestowed upon man, the Bosommuru *ntoro*.

Very long ago one man and one woman came down from the sky and one man and one woman came up from the earth.[1]

From the Sky God (Onyame), also came a python (*onini*), and it made its home in the river now called Bosommuru.

At first these men and women did not bear children, they had no desire, and conception and birth were not known at that time.

One day the python asked them if they had no offspring, and on being told they had not, he said he would cause the women to conceive. He bade the couples stand face to face, then he plunged into the river, and rising up, sprayed water upon their bellies with the words *kus kus*,[2] and then ordered them to return home and lie together.

[1] This dual origin of man is constantly alluded to in tradition and myths.

[2] These words are used in most ceremonies in connexion with *ntoro* and Onyame.

The women conceived and brought forth the first children in the world, who took Bosommuru as their *ntoro*, each male passing on this *ntoro* to his children.

If a Bosommuru *ntoro* man or woman sees a dead python (they would never kill one) they sprinkle white clay upon it and bury it.[1]

Agyinadie ntoro. This *ntoro* is supposed to have been given to man in a somewhat similar manner, by the crocodile.

Bosomtwe ntoro. This *ntoro* is supposed to have been given to man by Twe, the anthropomorphic spirit god of the lake.

Akankadie ntoro. 'Nyame (the Sky God) very long ago sent down a dove to the earth to a certain man and woman there with his blessing and a promise of children. The Ashanti say that persons of this *ntoro* are to be distinguished by their peaceful natures even to this day.

Myths and traditions in connexion with the remaining *ntoro* have not yet been traced.

Ntoro totems and taboos. An examination of the above myths and of the tables of the *ntoro* divisions show that one aspect at least of the *ntoro* is totemistic. We have a mythical spirit ancestor who was a python, a crocodile, an anthropomorphic water god, &c., with whom its descendants claim *ntoro* relationship, and this relationship is expressed in certain funeral customs.

Now evidence of participation in a funeral custom is held by the courts to be evidence of joint responsibility for a clansman's debt as proving kinship. The sprinkling of white clay and the burying of the python or leopard therefore obviously have a considerable significance.

With regard to the other animals, plants, &c., which might be regarded as associated totems or sub-totems, their position is less clear. The Ashanti say they do not respect them in any particular way. They do not eat them it is true, because they say if they did they would be ill. These taboos, they state, were established long, long ago because these particular things were found to disagree with their ancestors; new taboos are not now created in this sense.

These avoidances or taboos are called in Ashanti, Akyiwadie.

Every *obosom* (god) has its list, long or short, of Akyiwadie,[2]

[1] A *Bosompra* man treats a leopard in the same manner.

[2] The root is *kyi*, back, behind; hence, to hate; and the whole word literally means 'something you turn your back upon', i.e. a taboo.

or taboos or avoidances, but it would scarcely be correct to label these animals or things as totems of the *obosom* and thus of the persons serving that *obosom*.

There appears to be some distinction in the bond, say between the python, accorded funeral rites, and the Bosommuru man, as compared with his relationship with the monkey, dog, or palm wine, which he merely will not eat or drink because it may give him ' a pain in his belly '.[1] This, however, is a matter for future investigation.

When a woman marries, she will treat all her husband's *ntoro* taboos as her own (still observing those enjoined by her own *ntoro*), while the converse is not the case. Moreover, this recognition of the husband's *ntoro* taboos by the wife lasts only as long as the woman is of an age to bear children, or as long as she is living with him as his wife.

This is a further proof of the belief that it is the husband's *ntoro* that is instrumental in making and building up any offspring that may result from the union.

Yet again, in cases of adultery, the offence, to the Ashanti mind, is greatly aggravated if committed with a woman who is already enceinte, as the meeting of the two *ntoro* is supposed to cause the death of the child in the womb ; but should the adulterer by chance be of the same *ntoro* as the husband,[2] the offence is much less serious, as the two *ntoro* are really one and the same spirit and not so likely to cause fatal results to the expected child. The ceremony subsequent to conception but prior to birth offers additional proof of the importance of the husband's *ntoro*.

The following is an account of this rite, translated from the vernacular, as told me by a Queen Mother :

From the day on which a woman marries she makes her husband's *ntoro* taboos her own, lest if she did not she might offend his *ntoro* and thus seriously interfere with the conception

[1] There is, for example, clearly a magico-religious connexion between a person of the Bosommuru *ntoro* and the python from which he or she may be said to trace its origin, but there is no such apparent bond between that person and the monkey, dog, wild dog, bird, palm wine, and corn which are Akyiwadie or taboo to every one of that *ntoro*.

[2] On the other hand should the adulterer be the same *ntoro* as the woman, he is also breaking the law which decrees that 'like *ntoro* must not have sexual intercourse with like *ntoro*', and in olden times both parties would be punished by death or expelled from the clan.

and even the birth of the children she will bear her husband. About the sixth to seventh month the husband will give a present to his wife of a white cloth and some gold ornaments. The woman will then present her husband with a fowl (if his *ntoro* is Bosompra it must not be a white fowl) and eggs, saying :

'You of such and such an *ntoro*, take these and give to your *ntoro* that my child may come forth well and sound.'

The husband takes the fowl into the corner of his sleeping-room and addresses his *ntoro* thus :

'Bosommuru (or whatever his *ntoro* may be), come and receive this fowl that your child in the woman's womb may come forth without harm.' As he says this he severs the head of the fowl with a knife and allows some of the blood to fall upon the floor.

He then puts some *eto* (smashed yams or plantain), that his wife has made, in his *kuduo*[1] (brass vessel), and also puts some blood upon it.

He then sits down beside the *kuduo* and waits until the fowl has been plucked. This is done outside at the foot of the *onyame dua* (the forked post found outside almost every Ashanti house, on which is placed a pot or bowl with offerings to the Sky God (see Fig. 52). The fowl, after being plucked and singed over a fire, is brought back to the husband, who cuts it up. A piece is taken away, roasted, and brought back. The man then takes a leaf of the plant called *adwira*[2] and some salt, and putting both between his lips, says, *Kus ! kus ! kus ! Tweaduampon Onyame Bosompra, me kra, me 'bosom, mo ma akoda yi omera dwo* ('O supreme God, upon whom men lean and do not fall, O Bosompra *ntoro* (or whatever *ntoro* it may be), O my breath, oh my *obosom* (god), allow this infant to come forth peacefully').

He says this three times, blowing out the *adwira* leaf and salt, which he renews between his lips each time. He and his wife and any of their children then each eat a little of the roasted fowl.

The wife wears the white cloth, given to her by the husband, and the gold ornaments, and the child in her womb is said to be wearing these.

Fufu (pounded yam or plantain) is brought and soup (*nkwan*)

[1] The *kuduo* (see Chap. XXV) is a brass bowl varying in design, sometimes it is like a chalice cup, and often of beautiful workmanship. They are *agyapadie* or heirlooms.

[2] Ejura, north of Coomassie, is really Adwira, and is named after the plant.

made from the remainder of the fowl. The soup must not be poured over the *fufu* as would ordinarily be the case. The *fufu* is brought in by any one of the woman's own 'blood' (*abusua*), the wife carries the soup.

They all sit down beside the *kuduo* and eat, and some of the food is also placed in the *kuduo*.

After eating, the husband rubs some *hyire* (white clay) on the back of his wrists, while his wife paints, with her fingers, a line of clay from between her breasts to the navel and another strip half-encircling her waist but not quite meeting at the back. The husband also dresses in white. The man and woman now have connexion beside the *kuduo*.

In the evening the *eto* (mashed yams) and meat are removed from the *kuduo* and are given to their children to eat; some is also cast out on the ground and on the roof of the hut for the spirits of the Earth and for the Sky God.

This ceremony, which is called *afodie* (i. e. a ceremonial day), takes place on the proper day assigned to the particular *ntoro* to which the man belongs.

The following is an account of yet another rite in connexion with the *ntoro*.

It has been observed that a person 'washes his *ntoro*'. This lustration takes place on the day of the week proper to the particular *ntoro*. In the case of an ordinary man or woman the rite is conducted, without any intermediary priest or other person, in his or her own house.

In the old days, however, a regular weekly rite used to be performed in Coomassie for the Bosommuru *ntoro*, to which, as has been noted, so many famous Ashanti kings have belonged; and in this case, though each individual did his own ceremonial washing, the King of Ashanti, in the final ceremony, seemed to officiate for all, but there were still no priests (*akomfo*) in the proper sense.

Every Tuesday the King of Ashanti 'washed' in his own palace while all the chiefs and populace went to the Suben river. Here the people of lesser importance entered the water and bathed, while for those of more importance water was drawn in brass pans and taken up on the banks. Some water was also drawn from the special spot called *kwasu* and put in a gold *kuduo* (called *akra yawa*, souls' basin), and this was brought back to

Fig. 1. Lake Bosomtwe, looking south

Fig. 2. About to sacrifice a white fowl upon the Abrodwum stone

Fig. 3. The Abrodwum stone near Lake Bosomtwe

Fig. 4. On the lake shore just before the white fowl was cast into the water

the palace and placed in a room known as *Bosommuru dan* (*Bosommuru* room), sometimes called *Akrafieso* (Souls' House).

All the 'bathers' now met in the long audience court at the palace (called *pramma tentenso*) where the King of Ashanti was seated. A drummer, standing on the king's right hand, beat a drum called *'kukua*, when the king rose up and all followed him to the *Bosommuru* chamber.[1] Here the king, taking a little of the water in his mouth and spraying it out, said, *Kus, kus, me nkwaso, oman yi nye yiye*, 'Life to me, and may this nation prosper'.

He next took some *eto* (mashed yams) and eggs, and with a spoon placed some in a large *kuduo*, and then some leaves of the plant called *Bosommuru adwira* and placed these with some eggshells with the *eto* in the *kuduo*. He ate a little of the *eto* and eggs, the remainder being shared among the assembled people who lined up, in turn filing past an official called the *Bosommuru hene*, who gave a small portion to each.

All dispersed and smeared three lines of white clay (applied by smearing the three fingers with it) down each cheek, down the centre of the head (the hair has been cut short for the purpose), across the chest, on the shoulders, on the upper arms, and on the back of the wrists. The king puts it on the wrists only.

The ordinary person does not wash every week when his *ntoro* day comes round, but when his *obosom* (god) tells him that he should, and when, as my informant said, 'it is thought necessary'.

When a person dies, his or her *ntoro* does not accompany the ghost (*saman*) to the *samando*, spirit world. It is thought to remain behind and look after those persons of a similar *ntoro* who remain alive, and, I believe, eventually to be reincarnated.

This disembodied *ntoro* will, in the case of a man, concern itself, for example, with the children of the deceased. This does not hold for a woman, for her children would not be of her *ntoro* but her husband's; the *ntoro* would not in this case look after her children but (among many possible others) her brothers and sisters by the same father.

Before passing on to the Bosomtwe *ntoro* and the account of the lake of that name, there is just one point to which I wish to draw attention. It is that the *ntoro* element in man seems

[1] This, I am informed, is one of the rare instances of any *ntoro* having a special place set aside for the observance of its rites. Every man's sleeping-room is his *ntoro's* temple.

to be often connected with water or liquid, such as saliva, in some form, and from it to have derived its origin.

As will be noted in other chapters, water has a divine origin—'it comes from Onyame, the greatest of Gods—the Sky God'—and examples illustrating this belief may readily be found.

To take certain ceremonies at birth and at death: in the former, the new-born infant must not be washed with water that has been boiled; in the latter, the corpse generally is so bathed. *To boil water is to kill it*, and the new arrival from the 'cold' spirit world requires the first anxious eight days—when the tie binding it to this earth is so delicate—all the help it can get from terrestrial spirits and *abosom* (gods).[1]

I mention saliva, but will only here very briefly state that at the naming of a child, e. g. after his grandfather, the infant is taken to him on the eighth day, and he spits in his grandchild's mouth to strengthen the spirit already there, which is of course his own *ntoro* passed on through his son (not daughter, be it noted, for a grandchild by a daughter would not be of the grandfather's *ntoro*). The law is irrevocable which insists that only one of like *ntoro* can perform this ceremony.

Finally, it will be seen later that the great *obosom* (god) of all Ashanti is the Tano River, from which are derived countless of 'his children' as lesser *abosom*, and that he, i. e. Tano, is considered as the 'son of the Supreme God'.

Lake Bosomtwe

I shall now proceed to a more or less detailed account of this lake, giving the results of investigations made on the spot between the 1st and 14th of October 1921.

Bosomtwe is a lake in Central Ashanti lying approximately in Lat. 6° 30′ N., and Long. 1° 25′ E. It is just over five miles long and just under five miles broad. It lies in a perfect bowl

[1] The infant for the first eight days after birth is scarcely considered as a human being, being looked upon as possibly merely 'a ghost child' that has come from the spirit world, intending immediately to return.

If it die before the 8th day, 'it certainly was such'. The little body is then sometimes whipped, it is put in a pot with sharp-cutting elephant grass (*Pennisetum* sp.) and buried near the women's latrine.

The parents dress in holiday attire, partake of ground-nut soup (to show it is a joyful feast) and retire to their chamber and make pretence of lying together. All this is to shame the little stranger ghost that had dared to wander down into this world, and to discourage it returning in that form to endanger the life of a human mother.

or cup, the sides of which are thickly wooded hills rising about 500–700 feet above the lake, which I have been informed is itself some 200 feet above sea-level (*vide* Fig. 1). It has no outlet, but there are many small streams flowing into it from the mountain sides, and these, with the storm water from the hill-slopes, form apparently its source of supply. Its general appearance at once gives the layman the idea that its bed was formerly the crater of a volcano. The lake shore is closely dotted with villages, of which there are now twenty-six. There were formerly thirty, but four have been submerged and not rebuilt. A fuller account of these submerged villages will be given later.

The previous sum total of our knowledge concerning this lake is, I believe I am correct in stating, contained in an article by Mr. Kitson, C.M.G., C.B.E., Government Geologist, a copy of which is given in an appendix. His short geological report is most valuable and negatives the phenomenon I shall describe presently being due to volcanic causes.

The name and 'strong names' (*mmerane* is the Ashanti word for the latter) of this so-called 'Sacred Lake' are as follows, and practically constitute a title: Akwasi Bosomtwe Akowuakra.

Akwasi. This word, in the case of a person, signifies that the bearer of it is a male who was born on a Sunday. In the case of a god, or *obosom*, it means that this day is sacred to that deity. Sunday, it has been seen, is the day set aside for this particular *obosom* or *ntoro*.

Bosomtwe. This word is derived from *obosom* (god) and Twe; the latter is here a name for the supposed anthropomorphic lake spirit. (It has nothing to do with *otwe*, a duyker, as is sometimes stated.)

Akowuakra. This is a compound word the translation of which may be given as 'when you die, you bid farewell'. The explanation of this name is to be found in the Ashanti belief that just before death, the *sunsum* or *ntoro* or spirit, about to quit the body for ever, flits from wherever the dying man or woman may be, to this lake and says 'good-bye'.[1]

I suggest, therefore, as a name which is both etymologically

[1] What I believe to be a most interesting reference to this, written 200 years ago, is to be found in Bosman. He writes: 'Some of them take it for granted that the deceased are immediately conveyed to a famous river, situate in the inland country called *Bosmamque* (supposing this to be taken in a spiritual sense because it visibly appears that the body is left with them).'

accurate and sufficiently poetical, the title of ' The Lake of the Last Farewell '.

Referring now to the name (proper) of the lake, Bosomtwe, I propose to give both a myth and a tradition, the first touching upon the origin of the name, and the second concerning the lake's rediscovery in comparatively recent and historical times. The first is clearly the older but has become obscured by the more recent story which is really traditional history.

Very, very long ago, long before Akorobompi found the lake, there lived near the site of the present village of Hantase a very old woman. Her name is not even known, but she is spoken of as Aberewa, i. e. the old woman. She was a leper, had no mate and no children, and lived alone. One day out of the lake stepped an *obosom* (god) in the form of a man. He was called Twe (or Otwe, with the prenominal prefix). He made love to the old woman, but she remonstrated with him, saying should she become a mother, she would, living alone as she did, be unable, when the time came for her delivery, to get her own food, firewood, or water. Twe overcame her scruples by saying that any time she wanted anything she had only to crawl down to the lake shore and knock upon the water, when fish would come to her as food. The old woman eventually bore a son called Twe Adodo, the son of the lake spirit, and the first human being to have the Bosomtwe *ntoro*. Every Sunday Twe would come forth out of the lake and sit amid his followers who came with him, while once a year Twe Adodo, the son, would descend into the lake to ask his father about the fishing and if the lake would that year ' explode its gunpowder '.[1]

Coming now to the tradition which tells of the discovery, really the rediscovery of the lake, the following account is again a translation from the vernacular.

In the time of Oti Akenten,[2] a certain man, by name Akorobompi, lived at the village of Asaman. He had a wife called Senianepo. This man was a hunter, and one day he was following an antelope when he suddenly came out on the hills to the north overlooking the lake which was then unknown to the Asaman villagers. He descended to the lake shore, accom-

[1] This expression will be explained presently.
[2] Probably about the middle of the seventeenth century.

panied by his dog. The path he followed is still known, and where it reaches the water's edge offerings are still made to the lake spirit. Akorobompi returned home, telling his wife what he had seen. She is reported to have told him to return to the lake and 'splash it dry', in order to get any fish that were in it. Akorobompi made several visits to the lake, returning with three, four, and finally ten fish. The first two catches were given to his dog, and as it seemed none the worse he and his wife began to eat the fish themselves. The chiefs of Asaman, Kontanase, and Asansu all got to hear of the good fishing, and settlements of their slaves were founded along the lake shore for fishing purposes.

It was now that the chief of Akyem, by name Ampao, claimed the lake as being his before its discovery by the Asaman man, and he ordered the interlopers to clear off and captured and killed Akorobompi and his wife. This led to a war in which Asaman, Asansu, and Ahuren took part against the Akyems. At this time Komfo Anotchi—who was later, in Osai Tutu's reign, to become the most famous of all Ashanti priests—was at Coomassie. He must even then have had some reputation, for he was consulted by the above-named Ashanti chiefs as to the conduct of the war about to be fought.

Anotchi is reported as having advised that the Asaman chief and the Asansu chief should each take one of their sons, clothe them in a woven textile called *nkrawo*, arm each with a short gun or pistol (called by the Ashanti *akodiawua*), and set them in the path of the advancing army of Akyem. These instructions were carried out, and the two boys were set on the hill near the present village of Abrodwum (on the north shore of the lake) and were promptly slain.

The two armies are said to have met near a great *odum* tree on the side of the mountain near Anamrako. The fight lasted three days, chief Ampao being eventually routed and he himself, with many of his captains, being killed, including one Ntorikoko and the *Gyase-hene*. The skulls of Ampao and of Ntorikoko were said to have been at Asaman as late as 1895, and the skulls of two other *safohene* (captains), called Odi Kofi and Onipantwi, were, and I believe still are, at Asansu.

The lake was divided up among the Asaman, Asansu, and

Ahuren chiefs. Asaman took that part where Anamrako and Abanso now stand; Asansu took the present village of Ahantase; Ahuren took Dompa.

The Ashanti say that Akorobompi was following a duyker (*otwe*) at the time he saw the lake, and this comparatively modern historical tradition has hitherto been too readily accepted as the origin of a name which was no doubt that of the lake long before the seventeenth century.[1]

Leaving myth and tradition, I propose to describe the present-day rites as conducted in connexion with the lake cult. The first part of the ceremony about to be described was witnessed by me, the remainder is from a reliable eyewitness.

Having received permission from the chiefs and persons directly concerned with the rites in connexion with the lake *obosom*, I proceeded on the day appointed (a Sunday) to the village of A——, the headman of which, K. E., was also the *Okyeame* (official spokesman) to the chief of A——, who was also present.

At the foot of a tree, of the species known as *gyedua*, lies a large, flat-topped boulder, the sides of which are streaked with the blood of many former sacrifices. This stone is known as *Abrodwum 'bo*, 'the stone of Abrodwum', and has been removed from each successive village as the latter was submerged by the advancing waters of the lake. It will be remembered that it was near Abrodwum that Akorobompi first passed down to the lake shore, and it was on the path he is supposed to have followed, where it now enters the lake, that part of the ceremony about to be described was to take place. The ground round the stone having been swept clean, the headman of A——, with bared shoulders and without his sandals, advanced to the stone holding a white fowl (see Figs. 2 and 3), and spoke as follows:

'*Asida tintirinti obuo a osi dan mu, wadaworoma ye fua akoko yi de re ma wo, wa be gye akoko yi adi, ama asuoyi aye yiye na yenya emu nam pi. Asante 'man nye yiye, Kokofu hene nkwaso, Asaman hene nkwaso, Abuoso hene nkwaso, oburoni ne Aban nkwaso, yen a ye atwa ahyia ha nyina nkwaso, be gye akoko yi di.*'

[1] In Chap. XVIII it will be seen that this same name is born by a rock and a depression in the ground near Tano Oboase in northern Ashanti, which tradition says was the original home of Bosomtwe.

'Immovable one that stands so firm, rock which stands in a temple, by your favour we hold this fowl to give you, come and receive this fowl to eat, let this water be fruitful (lit. good) and permit us to get many fish in it. Let the Ashanti nation prosper, life to the Kokofu chief, life to the Asaman chief, life to the Abuoso chief, life to the white man and the Government, life to all who stand round you, come and receive this fowl to eat.'

With one sharp twist he wrung the head of the fowl from the body, allowing some blood to fall upon the stone and rubbing the bleeding headless neck over it. He next quickly laid the fowl down at the foot of the stone, holding it with his toes, and with one cut laid open the breast and stomach, folded the two sides right back, and took out the heart which he cast upon the stone, where it continued to pulsate for about fifteen seconds.

The fowl was then dissected, legs, wings, breast, and the lungs, intestines, and liver removed, parts of each of these being laid upon the stone. The remainder of the fowl was shared out among all present. The chief of A—— next took a half-full bottle of whisky and poured a little into a glass, pouring this over the stone and repeating the same words as were previously spoken, only substituting the words 'wine' and 'drink' for 'fowl' and 'eat'. The remaining whisky was shared out among those present. While this sacrifice was going on some men had been dispatched to clear a track from the main road to the edge of the lake which was supposed to follow the exact route taken by Akorobompi when he first discovered the lake. A curious incident now occurred. I had been previously informed that there was invariably an accident, resulting in the shedding of blood, when this track was being cleared. Sure enough back came a man with a gash on his left hand received, he said, by his cutlass slipping when he was clearing 'the bush'. I was informed that sometimes as many as five or six men were thus accidentally wounded. The reason given was that the cutting of the path disturbed the *sasa* (spirits) of the dead who had been killed in the war already described, and they suddenly woke up in a state of alarm, brandishing their invisible weapons.

The ceremony at Abrodwum being over, we all proceeded along the road which here runs parallel with the lake till we came to a broad clearing cut through the reeds leading off at

right angles to the road. This was the newly cleared track, proceeding down which we came out on the edge of the lake. Here the chief of A——, holding another white fowl in his hand, spoke as follows (see Fig. 4) :

'*Bosomtwe Akwesi, ye fua akoko yi de re ma wo, be gye akoko yi adi, ama asuoyi aye yiye na yenya emu nam pi. Aban nkwaso Asaman hene nkwaso, Abuoso hene nkwaso, Asanteman nyina nkwaso, yen a ye atwa ahyia nkwaso, Kokofu hene nkwaso.*'

' Bosomtwe Akwesi, we hold this fowl to give you, come and receive it to eat. Let this water be fruitful and let us receive plenty fish from it. Life to the Castle (i. e. Government) ; life to the Asaman chief ; life to the Abuoso chief ; life to all the Ashanti nation ; life to all who stand round ; life to the Kokofu chief.'

Having spoken thus he wrung the fowl's neck off and cast the fluttering bird as far as he could into the lake, where it floated, convulsed and flapping, till it at last lay still and slowly drifted away (see Fig. 5). The spirit of the lake had accepted the offering. Had it not, the fowl would have come back to the shore.

What now follows is an account of the full ceremony as practised in the old days when there was a King of Ashanti; it is taken down from the account of an eyewitness.

In olden times, when it was expected that ' the lake was about to conceive ',[1] the chief of Asaman informed the Ashanti King who sent sufficient gold dust to purchase two white fowls, a cow, a sheep, and a dog. He also sent a representative. The sheep was offered to the stools of Asaman (i. e. to the departed spirits of dead chiefs), special mention being made of Akuro Gyima Panyin, who fought for the lake in the time of Oti Akenten. The Ashanti King's representative (called *Akwanmofuo hene*), the chief of Abuoso, and the Asaman chief all proceeded to the lake and, on a Sunday morning previously agreed, a new path was cut down to the lake shore following the supposed track Akorobompi had taken in olden times.

As already stated, the cutting of this path awakens the *sasa* of Akorobompi and others who had died, and it is these who cause the men clearing the path to cut themselves.

[1] The full significance of this term will be explained later.

Fig. 5. The white fowl floating in the lake

Fig. 6. The making of the raft

FIG. 7. The raft at the landing-place at Abrodwum

FIG. 8. Showing various positions on *mpadua*

One white fowl is then first sacrificed at the Abrodwum stone, and the other to the lake (as already described).

The fowl having been 'received' by the lake, the cow is led to the same spot. It is thrown over by having its legs bound. The Asaman chief then comes forward, with a knife, and addresses the lake as follows:

'*Bosomtwe Akwesi nne afrinhyia ahyia, Asante hene ofua nantwie na ode re be bo wo asu, na wa gye nantwie yi adi, Asante hene nkwaso, Asaman hene nkwaso, Asanteman nkwaso, na afrinhyia yi ma apatere mmera na Asanteman nye bi nni.*

'Kwesi Bosomtwe, to-day the year has come round. The King of Ashanti holds this cow as an offering to the water, receive it and partake. Life to the Ashanti King, life to the Asaman chief, life to the Ashanti nation and this year may the fish come forth and the whole Ashanti nation eat.'

He then cuts the cow's throat. The heart and some of the lungs are very quickly removed and cast into the lake, then the assembled people fall upon the carcass and cut it up, the meat being portioned out to all.

While this ceremony is going on the dog is being sacrificed to 'the mother of Twe' across the lake, i. e. on the south-east side, near the mouth of the Aberewa river. This takes place near the village of Apeu and is performed by the *safohene* (captain) of the Asaman chief. The dog is killed by having its throat cut; the heart and lungs are cast into the river; the remainder of the dog is then portioned out and eaten. The river Aberewa is addressed as '*Aberewa Awukuwa*', and she is stated to be the mother of the lake spirit, but has no connexion with the old leper woman, the human wife of Twe, the lake spirit.

This concludes all I could discover concerning the myths, traditions, and magico-religious aspect of the cult of this lake, which has—so myth and tradition say—forbidden, and up to the present forbidden with success, the use of any of the following methods of catching fish, all equally 'hateful' to Twe, the anthropomorphic lake god.

1. Iron hooks of any description, or any kind of lure or line fishing.
2. *Asawu* (cast nets).

3. Seine nets.
4. The use of canoes, boats, sails, paddles, poles, or any hollowing out, even of a log.
5. Brass or metal pans (only wooden ones must be used).

While the following rules must also be observed :

6. No fishing on Sunday.[1]
7. No menstruating woman must go upon the lake.

Instead of canoes, the lake-side dwellers go about on what each calls his *padua.* These are logs with sides roughly hewn, as indicated in Figs. 6–9. They are made out of a very light wood almost as soft as cork called *odwuma fufuo*,[2] and are anything from 6 ft. to 10 ft. long, about a foot wide, and 6 in. to 8 in. deep.

The ends of some *padua* are cut away at both extremities so as to offer less resistance than a blunt prow, and a few were seen in which these ends stood out of the water higher than the centre.

The numerous photographs illustrating this chapter show more or less clearly the different types.

Two or more *mpadua* are lashed together to form an *mpata*, or raft, and these are used to carry out the larger and heavier nets to set up at the chosen fishing grounds. Such a raft, in process of construction and completed, is seen in Figs. 6 and 7.

No cross-struts are placed underneath, those on top are fastened by creepers, for rope may not be used, and such a raft must only be propelled in the manner to be described later.

It was upon such a craft that my various expeditions upon the lake were taken.

The etymology of the word *padua* I have not been able to trace with certainty. *Dua* is of course a log or a tree, and *pa* may be *pa* = good ; but if this be so we would expect the adjective to follow the noun, and so have *dua-pa.* Christaller gives in his dictionary *padua*, a log or block of wood in which the iron *pa* for securing the hand of a prisoner is fixed, and also *mpadua*, a bedstead. The latter is possibly the same word, with the root *mpa*, something to lie upon.

[1] Even should ' the Lake explode its powder ', on a Sunday no one might touch the fish till Monday.

[2] Corkwood or *Musanga Smithii.* For this and other botanical names I am indebted to Major T. F. Chipp, M.C., B.Sc., F.L.S., late Deputy Conservator of Forests, Gold Coast, now Asst. Director at Kew.

Fig. 9. Showing various positions on *mpadua*

Fig. 10. Villagers on *mpadua* turning out to meet our raft

FIG. 11. Two young scouts dashing off to announce our arrival at a village

FIG. 12. On the lake: note the great tree top showing above the water

In spite of the taboos forbidding the use of sail, paddle, oar, or pole, the *padua* is propelled along the surface of the water much faster than an ordinary canoe is paddled or poled by one man. The man on the *padua* uses his hands as paddles, lying face down on the log, when perfect steering control is obtained by a flick of the foot upon the surface of the water. The idiom for 'to paddle' is *yi abasa*, lit. 'to arm it'—'to throw out the arms'.

The various positions adopted on the *padua* will be understood from the photographs (Figs. 8–12).

The men are very fine swimmers and some show magnificent muscular development. They swim either the ordinary breast stroke or a double overarm with a scissor-like kick of the legs.

My raft was pushed and drawn, and the endurance of the men was wonderful, for to swim while pushing a raft with two persons upon it for eight consecutive hours in a broiling sun is no small feat.

The 'pushers', each on his own *padua*, kept the noses of their respective *mpadua* (or sometimes a foot) pressed against the stern of the raft; the 'tractors' were in front lying flat on their *mpadua* with a piece of creeper tied round an ankle or sometimes simply held in the folds of the belly muscles, the other end being attached to the raft (see Figs. 13–14).

In Fig. 13 the small white object at the bow is a model *padua* given me just before starting off, the rope is that used in the sounding operation, to be described later. This photograph was taken about three miles from the north shore on the return journey. I did not see any women on *mpadua* but was informed they were as expert as the men, and this I quite believe, as I used to see whole family parties alternately wading and swimming along the lake shore instead of following the road running between the villages.

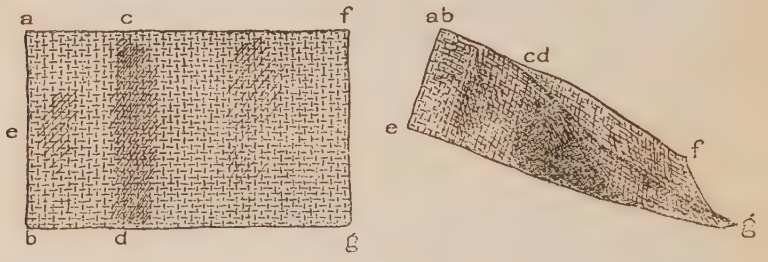
Coming now to the appliances used for fishing, these seem to be of four kinds. All are made out of the same material, i. e. strips of the reed the natives call *sibire*.[1] All these are really only slight variations of one simple design, consisting of an oblong-shaped mat woven of simple criss-cross pattern. See illustration on p. 64.

[1] A species of *Clinogyne Scitamineae*.

This is the basis of every kind of net or fish-trap used. The following are the Ashanti names of these :

(i) *Ntakwa.*
(ii) *Mpapare kotokuo.*
(iii) *Kotokuo kese.*
(iv) *Bagye.*

(i) *Ntakwa.* A small fish basket or trap made by folding over to meet the points *a*, *b*, *c*, *d* of the oblong, and lacing up the end *ab* to *e*, and *ab* to *cd*. The triangle from the points where *c* and *d* meet with base *fg* form the mouth of the trap, the pocket being at the opposite end ; *f* and *g* are pegged down with sticks, and from these is built a simple kind of fence of palm leaves spreading outwards and converging inwards to these points.



Ntakwa.

Between the sides of this fence walks the fisherman, splashing and making as much noise as possible till he comes to the mouth of the trap. Here he simply stoops down and whisks up the whole trap bodily out of the water, holding it so that the fish do not fall out.

(ii) *Mpapare*[1] *kotokuo.*[2] Again we have the simple oblong mat as the basis. The points *a* and *b* are folded together as before and sewn down the join, giving this result ; but instead of joining *c* and *d* as in the previous model, a cross-piece of wood is laid from *c* to *d* and the triangle formed by *acd* is woven over, forming a pocket.

The whole trap is now strengthened by building on sticks from *e* to *a*, *a* to *f*, *a* to *g*, and from *f* to *g*.

This trap is then held by one of the corners, *f* or *g*. The

[1] *Papare* is the name for one of the lake fish.
[2] See illustration on p. 65.

Fig. 13. Showing method of propelling the raft: a tractor

Fig. 14. Propelling the raft from the stern

Fig. 15. The fishermen, having dived and picked up the bottom of the net, are about to work their way along to the pocket at the end

Fig. 16. Working along to the pocket

Fig. 17. Nearing the pocket

Fig. 18. Unlacing the pocket

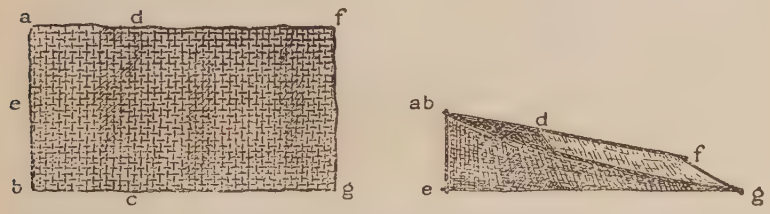
FIG. 19. The catch: note the wooden bowl

fisherman dives into the water, drags it along the bottom or among a shoal of fish, and by keeping a water pressure against the pocket-end keeps in the fish that enter till he comes to the surface.

(iii) *Kotokuo kese.* Again the basis of this net, which is a much larger affair, is the simple mat, but in this case a whole number of these are sewn together to form one very large complete oblong-shaped net.

I saw some spread out in the villages as much as 30 ft. in length, made up by joining smaller mats which are stitched together with strips of the same reeds of which the net itself is made.

This large composite net is now sewn up at the end to form a pocket exactly as is done with the *ntakwa.* The whole net is then taken out on a raft to where the water is the required



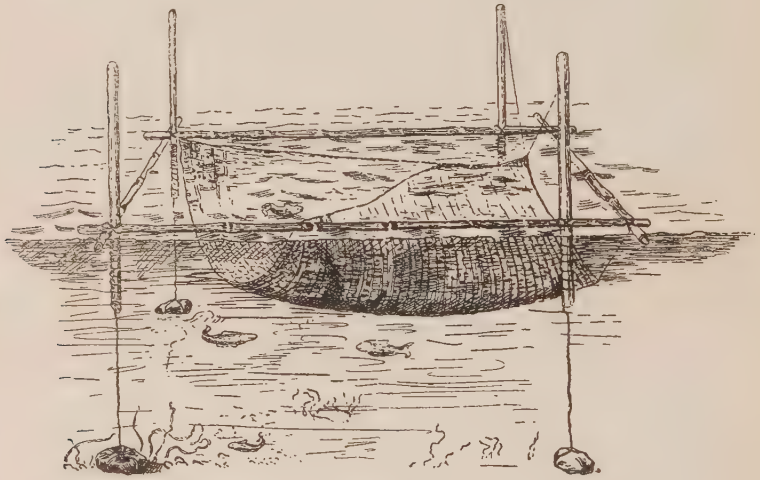
Mpapare kotokuo.

depth, i. e. such a depth as admits of the bottom edge of the mouth to lie on the mud at the bottom while the pocket-end is just on the surface.

The net is suspended on poles sunk in the mud. This net is fished in the following manner. Some five or six or more fishermen, each on his *padua*, line up about twenty yards from the net and then simultaneously start off at top speed, yelling '*padua! padua!*' and splashing and beating the water ; as soon as they reach the mouth of the net they slip off their *mpadua*, dive under the water, and pick up the under part of the net, bringing it to the surface (Fig. 15). They then work their way along, under the net all the time (Fig. 16), till eventually the pocket is reached (Fig. 17). This is unlaced (Fig. 18) and the fish in it are poured either into a wooden bowl or into a cloth (Fig. 19).

(iv) *Bagye.* This is the net used in deep water. It is rather

a clever adaptation of the *kotokuo kese* (lit. large pocket or bag) just described. Instead of the under edge of the net lying on the bottom, it is suspended under water from four floating bamboos; these are anchored to the bottom of the lake by lengths of creepers tied together and weighted with large stones. Fastened on to these anchor lines are the upright supports which give this net the exact appearance of the *kotokuo kese*, though these uprights of course are not fixed in the bottom, which may be sixty feet below, but only go far enough down the taut creeper to give them a support.



Bagye.

None of these traps or nets, it will be noted, are self-acting, i. e. apart from the fisherman there is nothing to prevent the fish swimming into the net and swimming out again. There is, however, another way of catching fish which is even more primitive. It is called *abontuo*. The fisherman dives under the water, remains under from thirty to forty seconds, and comes up holding a fish between his teeth—to leave the hands free for swimming. I think they catch these fish possibly lying on the mud at the bottom, and 'tickle' them just as boys do in Scotland in the burns.

All fishing methods give, the fishers say, but poor and small results in comparison with the tremendous hauls of fish sent by the lake spirit when 'Bosomtwe explodes his gunpowder'.

The expression *Bosomtwe oto atuduru* (Bosomtwe has fired or exploded gunpowder) is widely known, and is often heard in Ashanti even far away from the vicinity of the lake. At the lake itself it is accepted as a matter of course and seems to call for no special comment, so used to it are the lake-side inhabitants, who attribute it to the workings of the great lake spirit.

It is stated that periodically, i. e. yearly, every two years, or at even longer periods,[1] 'the lake conceives' (*Bosomtwe fra ahom*). A clear description of what first happens I cannot get; some say it becomes rough, others that it bubbles up, but one and all declare that this disturbance has nothing to do with the wind. The colour of the water in the lake changes to almost black, and apparently quite suddenly, for they say this often happens at night, the air becomes full of a choking smell of what they describe as 'gunpowder'. One witness said 'as if a hundred kegs had been fired'. All say this smell comes from the black slime which rises on the water which, it is alleged, can be perceived some miles away. So far as I could ascertain, no report or rumblings accompany or precede this.

Simultaneously, or soon after, the whole surface of the lake becomes covered with fish, either dead or flapping on the surface so that they can be readily caught. It is said that these are in such numbers that it is not possible to remove them all. The news that 'Bosomtwe has exploded his gunpowder' spreads far and wide, and people come to collect the fish even from inland villages, and one reliable witness said he had waded through thousands of fish floating dead or gasping on the surface of the water.

All the old lake dwellers state that this phenomenon used to be of fairly regular annual occurrence. They ascribe it not having happened for some three years to the fact that certain people are getting lax about the taboos, and they never cease to upbraid the young taboo-breaking generation who are, by their actions, offending the lake spirit and causing it to withhold its gifts.

It is the business of the anthropologist as of the lawyer to consider and to weigh evidence. I think the statements of so

[1] It is everywhere stated that the phenomenon last happened some time during 1918.

many independent witnesses testifying to the same facts are in this case 'good evidence', and that all the facts point to the existence of some natural phenomenon the exact nature of which must be left for the specialist to investigate. The most probable explanation is given in Appendix D to this chapter.

It may be argued that all this has remained unknown and unheard of all the years of European occupation in Ashanti, and that it is improbable that it could have happened and yet have passed unrecorded. Such a presumption is not, however, from my own experience, a fair one so far as events and information concerning this country are concerned.

The phenomenon which only lasts a day or so, is well-known to every lake-dweller. The people do not refer to it except in a phrase unintelligible to the majority of Europeans, who, even if they did understand it, would think (unless they investigated the matter carefully), that it referred to some 'fetish custom'.

A certain amount of romance has hung round 'the Sacred Lake' ever since the reported attempt on the part of Mr. A. J. Philbrick to take soundings. The only knowledge I have concerning this attempt is contained in Mr. Kitson's article to which reference has already been made. He therein writes: 'Its (i. e. the lake's) depth is unknown. An attempt was made to sound it by Mr. A. J. Philbrick, acting Chief Commissioner of Ashanti, but unfortunately when 500 feet of line had been let down it broke, and the attempt was abandoned.'

A few days spent with the fisher-folk who live in villages scattered all round the lake shore soon elicited the information that every existing village about which inquiries were made was the third or fourth of that name. The former villages, which had once been inhabited by the oldest living people, being now a considerable distance out in the lake and under water.

As the sites of many of these villages had apparently been marked by anchoring a log or raft—presumably with the idea of claiming that area of water—I conceived the idea of taking accurate soundings over these sites and thus securing some reliable data as to the rise of the lake level within recent times.

It would be hardly possible for the most casual observer not

to note that the lake level had risen, for the tops of great forest trees may be seen here and there sticking out of the water (Fig. 12).

By the courtesy of the P.W.D. I obtained some 400 feet of 'hammock rope'. Armed with this rope weighted down with a pickaxe head, I set out on a raft, accompanied by Major and Mrs. W. of the Survey Department—who happened to be spending a week-end at the lake—and with guides, who knew the sites of the former villages of Abono.

The present village of Abono is situated on the north shore of the lake about 150 yards from the lake shore. It is, I was informed, the fourth Abono within comparatively recent times. The present chief, who is a very old man, has lived in all four villages, and from the names of the Ashanti kings who were on the stool at the time, it is possible to get approximately correct dates when these different villages were inhabited and abandoned, and hence, once soundings had been taken, to get an approximately correct record of the number of feet the lake has risen in a given time.

Leaving the waterside of the present village of Abono, our guides, on their *mpadua*, took our raft a course along the lake shore, going west for about half a mile; here, close to the reeds and about 20–30 yards from the land, was pointed out as Abono No. 3. The depth of water was only about 4 feet. No trace of the village remained visible, but the stump of a tree was projecting above the water. This village I later discovered was inhabited in the reign of King Mensa Bonsu, 1874–83, and had been evacuated in that of King Prempeh, 1888–95.

The raft was next taken on a bearing approximately 125° true E., and about 250 yards out we came to Abono No. 2. The sounding here gave exactly 29 feet. This village had been abandoned in the reign of Mensa Bonsu, 1874–83. An anchored raft marked this site.

Continuing on the same course to about 500–600 yards from the shore we came to a log, anchored. Here was Abono No. 1. The sounding gave 61 ft. 9 in. This village had been abandoned in the reign of King Kwaku Dua I, 1836–68. The present chief of Abono was born in this village. He is a man, I should say, of between sixty and seventy years of age. We thus have

definite data that the level of the lake has risen 61 ft. 9 in. in the last sixty to seventy years.

After taking these soundings we continued on the same course and the following soundings were taken.

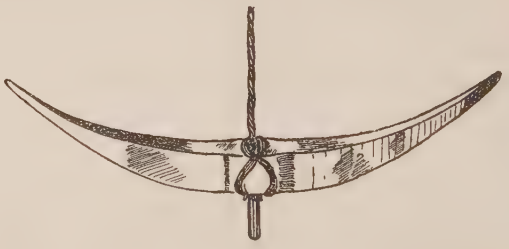
Approx.	1,000	yards from shore,	85 ft.	2 in.
,,	1	mile ,, ,,	105 ,,	
,,	1¼	miles ,, ,,	123 ,,	
,,	1½	,, ,, ,,	147 ,,	6 ,,
,,	1¾	,, ,, ,,	174 ,,	

After this last sounding we turned back, as Major W. had to return to Coomassie that same afternoon.

These soundings came as a surprise, as I had expected a much greater depth in view of previous reports. I decided therefore to try and cross the lake at the centre from north to south and take soundings right across.

On the 13th October, having arranged for six of the best swimmers to be ready with a light raft, I left Abono water-side at 8 a.m. In connexion with what had previously been told me about the 'firing of the gunpowder', the smell of powder, and the alleged killing of the fish, I was very anxious, if possible, to secure samples of the mud from the lake bottom at the greater depths, an analysis of which might shed some light on this question.

For this purpose the following rude appliance proved adequate. The hollow socket of the pickaxe, through which the rope passed, was filled with wooden wedges, and into the centre of these was pushed the tin sheath of an ordinary clinical thermometer with the open end downwards. This tube projected thus:



The course taken from Abono No. 4 was on a compass bearing of approximately 150° E.

Without a stop we proceeded till 9.15 a.m., when I reckoned we had passed the point at which the last sounding had been taken on the previous occasion. The sounding now taken gave 188 ft. No deposit of any kind came up in the tube.

At 9.40 the next sounding was taken. This gave 218 ft. The tube came up full of a thick black slime with a smell I could not place; it seemed to catch one's eyes and throat. The contents were shaken out, placed in a glass tube, and corked up.

The next sounding was taken at 10.15, when I calculated we were about the centre of the lake. This sounding gave 228 ft. The tube again came up full of mud, and mud was also sticking between the wooden wedges in the pick-head socket. This mud was again put in a second glass tube.

The next sounding at 11 a.m. gave 233 ft. 2 in. No deposit came up, but it was possible that it was washed out on the way to the surface. This turned out to be the maximum depth obtained.

The next sounding, taken at 11.15, gave practically the same depth, 233 ft. I wrote in my note-book at the time: 'I think we are now more than half-way across the lake, and I should not be surprised if next sounding gives lesser depth. Course taken since last sounding almost south or slightly west of south if anything.'

I began here to have some difficulty in getting my men to go any farther. They said no human being had ever crossed the lake, and that if I persisted we should die, and I was regaled with stories of the *adare*—a great mythical lake monster—and how one of my men had only escaped from it by casting away his *padua*, which he had left the *adare* crunching up. These stories were received with great amusement by some of the men, but the fact remains that cross the lake in a direct line they would not. They were quite willing to cut across anywhere but the centre, and so would have eventually crossed by a zigzag course.

The sixth sounding was taken at 11.30; I calculated about $2\frac{1}{2}$–$2\frac{3}{4}$ miles from the north shore, and gave 233 ft. (no mud).

Seventh sounding 11.45, 233 ft. (plenty of mud).

The last four soundings had covered a distance of perhaps $\frac{1}{2}$–$\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile, and showed the lake bottom to be here as flat as a table.

Eighth sounding 12.15, 227 ft.

Ninth sounding 12.30, 218 ft. (deposit brought up).

I calculated we had now gone more than three-quarters of the way across. The huts in the villages on the south shore were standing out clearly. My men absolutely refused to continue the journey directly across. They were willing to branch off from the direct course and then come up along the shore, but they refused to take the straight line to the shore. As the last few soundings seemed to show we were gradually getting into shallower water I decided to allow the men to return, and we eventually reached our point of departure at 3.55 p.m., just about eight hours after setting out—a truly remarkable feat for these swimmers propelling the raft. These soundings, while being of some value as giving the first clear data we have to go upon, I need hardly state do not necessarily prove that there is no spot in the lake which is 500 ft. deep or more. They only give the depths across the centre on a bearing approximately north to south. A chemical analysis of the mud brought up is given as an appendix to this report (Appendix B).[1]

I suggest the lake level may have risen owing to the inflow of water being in excess of evaporation or possibly to a filling up or rise of the lake bottom. All the old inhabitants round the lake tell of its marked change in appearance within their own time. They say forty or fifty years ago it was a much smaller body of water, and the position of the submerged villages bears this out. With regard to the possibility of the lake level rising owing to excess of inflow over evaporation, it is interesting to note that when I visited the lake in the height of the rains, and after an exceptionally wet season, an hour after the rain stopped the rivers or streams down the mountain side were stony beds with very little water. Moreover, the name for all these streams, with one exception, is simply *obo* (stone), without the usual suffix *su* (water).

Earthquakes (*asase pusuo*) are familiar to all the adult inhabitants of the lake villages. The last is reported as about eight to ten years ago, which destroyed the chief of Abono's hut. Earthquakes are of course not unknown elsewhere on the Gold Coast.

[1] By Mr. R. Drew, of the A.G.C. Assay Office, to whom, for this and other scientific reports, I am much indebted.

Some of the older inhabitants state there used to be a whirlpool (*kyinhyia*) in the lake. They so exactly describe this that it seems almost impossible they can be speaking of something they have never seen. On the other hand, there are many others who state they have never seen it. There is, moreover, a saying current all along the lake shore which runs, *Wo amma Takyi anko, wo amma Takyi ansan, wo ama Takyi aka nsensenmu,* 'You did not let Takyi go, you did not let Takyi return, you have made Takyi remain half-way.' This refers to a man 'Takyi' who insisted on crossing the lake; he was caught in a whirlpool, went round and round in ever-narrowing circles, till he suddenly disappeared in a hole in the surface of the lake. When on the lake I scanned its whole surface with glasses but could see no indication whatever of any surface disturbance. I made inquiries concerning the 'flashing lights' mentioned in Mr. Kitson's report. The old chief of Abono was quite matter-of-fact about these; he said they were, he thought, caused by rascals who went round robbing other people's nets at night, and took fire in a bowl to scare away easily frightened people.[1]

I conclude this chapter by giving what I am afraid is a somewhat sketchy account of the animals, birds, and fish that frequent the lake.

Of animals, the following do not occur: the crocodile, hippopotamus, and crabs. None of these have ever, it is stated, been known in the lake; on the other hand, there is a species of fish-eating crocodile the natives call *akyekye.* I did not, however, see any of these. It is stated that when the 'lake fires its gunpowder' these reptiles leave the water and go up the streams till the water clears. Pythons are reported as common; one of our *padua* men sang the python's song to us one day we were on the raft:

Kru, kru, kru, nne wukuo kru, nne wukuo kru, nne wukuo.'

('*Kru, kru, kru,* to-day is Wednesday *kru,* to-day is Wednesday *kru,* to-day is Wednesday.')

I did not see any fish much over a quarter of a pound in weight all the time I was at the lake. The fisher-folk recognize

[1] But see Appendix D which gives probably the true explanation of these lights.

nine different kinds; some of these have been identified by Mr. Norman of the Natural History Museum, to whom I am much indebted (see Appendix C). There are said to be frogs, but I did not see any, and, as I did not sleep on the lake shore, I did not hear them.

APPENDIX A

'There is only one real lake in the country, and that is the sacred Lake Bosumtwi in central Ashanti, about 18 miles south-east of Coomassie. This freshwater lake is roughly circular in shape, with a diameter of about 4 miles and an area of some 13 square miles. It lies in a deep depression, with steep sides rising to 600 and 700 feet above its surface. Its depth is unknown. An attempt was made to sound it by Mr. A. J. Philbrick, acting Chief Commissioner of Ashanti, but unfortunately when 500 feet of line had been let down it broke, and the attempt was abandoned. Though a lake with no outlet, and only a few small annual streams flowing into it, the water is fresh. Its general appearance suggests a volcanic origin, viz. that it is a caldera, but since no evidence whatever has been found on its north-eastern and northern rim and shore of young volcanic rocks, that view is hardly tenable. The available evidence suggests its formation as due to subsidence. Numbers of villages stand on the shores of the lake. There are several interesting native beliefs about the lake. It is sacred to the Ashantis, who regard it as a great fetish. They believe that it is the seat of a powerful and energetic spirit which manifests itself intermittently on its open surface by flashing lights, making noises like the discharge of artillery, and in various other ways. No canoes, paddles, fish-hooks, or brass pans are allowed on or near it. Fish abound in the lake, and are caught in an ingenious manner by the natives. Plaited reed mats with gaping mouths are taken out from the shore by men lying face downwards on cigar-shaped logs of wood. They propel themselves by paddling with their hands, and having set and anchored the nets, mouths open, the lower platform just submerged, they retire for some time. The fish enter the trap and bask in the subdued sunlight, resting on the lower portion. The fishermen return almost noiselessly, pull together the two parts of the trap, capture the fish and tow them and the trap ashore.'—Extract from a paper read by Mr. A. E. Kitson, C.B.E. before the R.G.S., June 1916.

APPENDIX B

A.G.C. Assay Office,
24th November 1921.

CAPTAIN RATTRAY,

I have received two samples of mud from Lake Bosomtwe, which I have examined.

The mud is mainly composed of decomposed organic matter, i. e. leaves, plants, &c., in a moderately fine state of division, together with a small quantity of finely divided inorganic matter, resulting from the weathering of rocks.

I have been unable to detect any free Sulphur ; the presence of which would indicate volcanic action, although the reverse does not necessarily prove the contrary.

Sample No. C from 8th sounding contains what appears to be a small fish scale.

Chips of rocks are absent, also any minerals which would be of great assistance in determining the probable cause of the periodic disturbances.

In summing up, I believe the mud to be suspended matter from the supernatant water which gradually accumulates on the bottom of the lake, and I think has very little bearing on the origin of the periodic disturbances as it is only the upper layer.

A sample of mud which I took from a stream in Obuasi was very similar in composition to that from the Lake.

(Sgd.) R. DREW.

APPENDIX C

British Museum (Natural History),
Cromwell Road, London, S.W.7.
22nd September 1922.

DEAR SIR,

I have examined the fishes from Ashanti, which all belong to the family *Cichlidae*. None of them are new forms, but several are most useful for the Museum Collection. I find that we received a collection of fishes in 1888 from Lake Busumchi, and imagine that this is another way of spelling the same lake, especially as the forms obtained by Capt. Rattray agree with them. A list of the species represented is as follows :

Hemichromis fasciatus, 3 specimens
Tilapia multifasciata, 1 ,,
Tilapia zillii, 1 ,,
Tilapia melanopleura, 3 ,,

I remain, Yours faithfully,
J. R. NORMAN.

APPENDIX D

Geological Survey Office,
28 Jermyn Street, London, S.W.1.
14th December 1921.

My dear Rattray,

There are certain lakes (or meres) in Shropshire which behave in a very remarkable way. They are freshwater lakes with no outlet. Every two years or so there is a phenomenon known to the local people as the 'breaking of the meres'. What happens is that the organic matter which has been growing and collecting and putrefying on the bottom of the lake finally gets so buoyant with gases produced by decomposition that it all rises to the surface and forms a black scum which has a terrific stench. If there were an outlet, so that the water circulated, this would not take place. The chief of these lakes is Ellesmere. Mr. P., one of our men who has been surveying in the district, tells me about this. It seems to me that the circumstances are very similar in the case of your lake. Of course in the warmer climate it would probably occur oftener (about once a year is it?). Your lake is also fresh and has no outlet. The smell of rotten eggs is not necessarily nor usually volcanic but can come from the decomposition of many organic bodies. Much of the gas given off would probably be marsh gas, and this is usually accompanied by a little phosphoretted hydrogen which causes it to ignite instantaneously as it comes into contact with the atmosphere. This is the cause of the will-o'-the-wisp. It is not usual to have a loud report, but that would all depend on the mixture of gases given off.

(Sgd.) T. Robertson.

III

MATRILINEAL DESCENT IN ASHANTI

In a previous chapter the nomenclature relative to the Ashanti relationship terms and the laws of succession and inheritance were described. I now propose to examine the position of women in this country, with special reference to the *ahema* or 'queen mothers'. As has been seen, the Ashanti system of tracing descent is matrilineal and matripotestal, that is, clan descent is traced through the female, and authority in the family lies mainly in the hands of the mother's brother, the maternal uncle (*wofa*). We have seen that:

(i) *Abusua* (clan) is synonymous with *mogya* or *bogya* (blood).

(ii) A woman alone can transmit blood to descendants, male or female.

(iii) Under no conceivable circumstances whatever can a male transmit his blood, which he derived from his mother, and in consequence no Ashanti can, according to orthodox belief, have a drop of the male parent's blood in his or her veins.

(iv) The male parent transmits to his children his *ntoro*—which I have translated by 'spirit'—and the male alone can transmit this *ntoro*, which is present in every person, male and female.

(v) Both the *abusua* and *ntoro* are exogamous.

(vi) The *abusua* and *ntoro* together account for all the marriage prohibitions.[1]

(vii) The *raison d'être* given by the Ashanti for tracing *bogya* (blood) through the female line alone is to be found in certain physiological conditions which they have observed, i.e. the presence of blood at child-birth and during menstruation.

(viii) The presence of blood on these occasions has given rise to the supposition that 'blood alone can be transmitted by and through a female'.

While discussing this matter with three old women, one of whom was the 'Queen Mother' of B——, I asked why, if a male had blood in his body, as they acknowledged he had, he could not then transmit it to his offspring. I have indeed repeatedly

[1] With the 'age class' taboos.

asked this question and always been told such a thing was impossible and had never been heard of. On this occasion the answer was that ' if a male transmitted his blood through the penis he could not beget a child '.

I can conceive no possible answer that would show more clearly the underlying belief in the minds of these people, but if further evidence be needed, then the fact that the word for the male-transmitted *ntoro* (spirit) seems sometimes used in the sense of semen supplies that proof.

To the Ashanti mind therefore the word *bogya* (blood) in the wider sense we now use it, as being something that may be transmitted by either or both parents, is incomprehensible.[1]

As a result of this belief as seen in daily practice, *abusua*, i. e. clan or blood, in all cases decides the succession to stools and the inheritance of property. The *ntoro*, while regulating, by exclusion, certain unions of the sexes, is of lesser practical importance ; its action in certain other respects being spiritual rather than material.

The most obvious results of a social organization framed on such lines is to raise immediately the status of women in the community, and when matrilineal descent is found in a society which is frankly communistic, we seem to have in these two factors in many parts of Africa the key to the importance of women, which has been noted by numerous observers.

A proverb, that may be heard as often as the question is put to an Ashanti man or woman why a woman should be of such account, runs as follows : *Oba na owo obarima*, ' A woman gave birth to a man.' The full significance of this saying will be explained later.

The second factor—the communistic state of the family—has as important if less obvious results.

In the chapter on ' the Ashanti Classificatory System ' it was

[1] Yet a further proof that what I now state is correct appears to me to be found in the well-known custom (noted by Bowdich 100 years ago) which 'countenanced the King's sisters not only in intrigue with any handsome subject . . . but allowed them to choose any eminently so (however inferior otherwise), as a husband . . . thus they consider they provide for a personal superiority *in their monarchs*.' (Bowdich, *Mission to Ashanti*.) [The italics are mine; not only were such unions permitted, but the son of such a marriage, or illicit intercourse, even if the father had been a slave, could become a king, because he only inherited his mother's royal blood.]

recorded that wives were inherited in exactly the same way as any other property ; even in the case of a chief who is not dead but who has been deposed, or de-stooled as it is called in West Africa, his successor has a perfect right to have his predecessor's wives transferred to him equally with any other stool property. Again, on examination of the marriage laws, it will be found that, under certain circumstances, the native idiom for ' to marry ' is *to 'yere*, lit. ' buy a wife '.

These two isolated instances, removed from their proper context, might well lead the casual observer to suppose that an Ashanti wife was little better than a man's chattel and to point to the servile condition of women.

But in Ashanti no woman stands alone, for behind the woman stand a united family, bound by the tie of blood, which has here a power and a meaning we can hardly grasp. ' If you see one parrot do not throw a stone at it, for there are many others,' runs one of their sayings.

The whole conception of ' mother-right ' affords the woman a protection and a status that is more than an adequate safeguard against the ill-treatment by any male or group of males.

Her children belong to her and her clan, not to that of her husband.

All her individually acquired and inherited property is hers and her clan's, and her husband cannot touch it. Not only is this so, but when she dies, no male even of her own clan may be her heir until all her female blood (clan) relations are extinct.[1]

From these facts it is clear that the position of women in Ashanti is one of great importance.

' I am the mother of the man,' she says, and her meaning we cannot understand until a fuller knowledge of Ashanti social and religious organization shows us what is meant.

' I alone can transmit the blood to a king.'

' If my sex die in the clan then that very clan becomes extinct, for be there one, or one thousand male members left, not one can transmit the blood, and the life of the clan becomes measured on this earth by the span of a man's life.'

Yet again, unless we understand the full significance under-

[1] This I believe never to have been fully recorded before though Bosman hints at it in two lines in his work.

lying that aspect of the Ashanti religion which enjoins that the spirits and memories of famous ancestors be venerated and propitiated, we cannot fully grasp what a calamity in the Ashanti mind, the extinction of his clan entails.

For not only are human beings divided into exogamous clans and *ntoro*, but in the spirit world (*samando*) the ghosts continue to be concerned with and able not only to confer good upon, but to receive benefits from, those members of the human community alone who were their clansmen on earth. I believe also it may yet be shown that the only hope the inhabitants of the 'cold shadowless spirit world'[1] have of reincarnation upon 'the warm sun-bathed earth' lies in being born again into that *abusua* (and just possibly also *ntoro*) of which they were members on earth. The extinction of the clan would therefore mean the extinction of all hope of return to this world.

I believe in all this we shall find the secret of that irrevocable law among the Ashanti which decrees that none but a clansman (or clanswoman) may ever sit on the clan stool, a belief which, when all the relations are exhausted, causes them to seek a successor from among a group whom they may never have seen, living in a remote part of the country but bearing the clan's name and thus 'all one blood'.

When these researches had led to the disclosure of the above-mentioned laws, I felt convinced that such indirect proofs pointing to the importance of the female sex in the community must, over and above the acknowledgement of that fact as seen in these abstract principles, have had also certain concrete results, and I was prepared also to find proof of them in what anthropologists call 'Survivals', i. e. some custom or practice that survives after its original significance has been lost. I was not prepared, however, to find that the signs sought for, so far from having become extinct, or remaining only to be traced in survivals, were before our eyes and patently obvious once previous study had focussed our attention upon them.

They were not even secrets or half-mysteries such as the *abusua* and *ntoro* are. These, I believe, could never have been explained clearly by investigations conducted through an interpreter or by the medium of semi-educated or ignorant natives.

[1] The Ashanti picture of the world of ghosts.

There is indeed one fact that I believe to have militated against their being known as widely as the circumstances would appear to warrant, the very small number of Europeans who have ever known or made friends with the old Ashanti mothers. 'The old woman you may see crouching behind him (the chief), or whom you may not see at all, but who is with him all the same, and says, "Do not listen to the white man, it is bad for you".' That great Englishwoman, Mary Kingsley, wrote these words, with an intuition that seems almost inspired.

Now it has been my privilege to have broken down in some measure the barriers of the suspicion and distrust that divide us from these old African mothers, and the reward has been a revelation which is still so fresh upon me as to make it perhaps difficult to grasp its full significance.

In a later volume a description will be given of the position of the senior female in the ruling clan, i. e. the *Ohema* or so-called Queen Mother, and of the part she took (and to an ever-lessening extent still takes) in local government and in the selection and enstoolment of a chief. A few details only are now given.

The old Ashanti women tell me—and this information is almost without exception confirmed by the older men—that the senior stool (*okonua panyin*) is the stool of the *Ohema* or Queen Mother, for there are two stools, that of the Queen Mother and that of her kinsman, the chief's stool. The latter has been the only one so far accorded political recognition.

The recognized seniority of the woman's stool is no empty courtesy title. In fact, but for two causes, the stool occupied by the male would possibly not be in existence at all: 1. The natural inferiority of women from a physical standpoint.[1] 2. Menstruation (with its resultant avoidances). In other words, a woman, besides suffering from periodical disability, cannot go to war; but for these two facts the Ashanti woman,

[1] I believe that the second reason will be found to be merely a case of cause and effect. Researches in the avoidances connected with menstruation have led me to believe that a Queen Mother does not go to war, not because of any physical inferiority, but because a woman up to a certain age has her monthly periods and is 'unclean' with all the possible disastrous effects resulting from contact with her. Four 'Queens' of Ashanti are recorded as having accompanied an army to war, i. e. 1. Juaben Sewa, Q.M. of Juaben. 2. Ata Birago, Q.M. of Kokofu. 3. Akyia, Q.M. of Asansu. 4. Ya Santewa, Q.M. of Ejeisu (who was exiled with Prempeh. But all these women only went to war 'because they were old and had passed the menopause').

under a matrilineal system, would, I believe, eclipse any male in importance. A king's son can never be the king, but the poorest woman of the royal blood is the potential mother of a king. I purposely reiterate this fact because I think its import has never been fully grasped. Moreover, in olden times when a chief had to be chosen it was the Queen Mother who had most to say in the choice to be made. She would summon her clan mates, male and female, and they would discuss the matter apart from the sub-chiefs and elders belonging to other clans.

Having chosen the chief the Queen Mother sends a message to the sub-chiefs and elders who now discuss the nominee, and when they have agreed, as I am told they generally do—no one can be put upon the stool against whom the Queen Mother gives her veto—the Queen Mother is informed.

The new chief-to-be is admonished in the presence of all the clan and given much excellent advice by 'his mother'[1] as to his future mode of life, and then conducted into the presence of the assembled chiefs.

After the usual ceremonies he is taken to where his stool stands apart. He is set upon it the customary three times,[2] and after his sandals have been placed upon his feet and a robe thrown over his shoulder, all the attendant officials with the stool move up to where the Queen Mother sits. Then the new chief takes the customary oath and sits down on the right of the Queen Mother to receive the homage and oaths of allegiance of the assembled chiefs. Ever after, as long as he is king, the Queen Mother's place is on his left hand. She is the 'old woman' of Miss Kingsley's picture.

Whenever the chief travels abroad, except to war, she must accompany him, and when the chief sits in court her place is beside him. She alone has the privilege of rebuking him, his spokesman (*okyeame*), or his councillors in open court, and of addressing the court and questioning litigants.[3] To her, too, petitions are addressed praying for pardon or mitigation of a sentence.

Every Queen Mother has the right to choose one wife for the

[1] Not necessarily the chief's mother, often his sister.
[2] The lowering and raising of the body about to be buried.
[3] When she has her menses, she of course may not attend court.

chief, who becomes his ' senior wife ', and to replace her if she dies. The senior wife or, if she has grown very old her daughter, is the potential regent when the king goes to war.[1] She takes the chief's name and the Queen Mother calls her *me 'ba* (my child), and she calls the Queen Mother *ena* (mother). The regent, originally only a woman of the royal harem, has, however, from her want of training, no knowledge of customary law and of court procedure, and the whole of these duties devolve upon the Queen Mother, who holds court and decides cases with the full powers of the chief. But more than this, for in the ordinary way, when the chief is in residence, the Queen Mother seems to have jurisdiction in her own court over women connected with her own attendants and also in all cases of disputes between the chief and his wives. Moreover, the Queen Mother has her own ' spokeswomen '. She appears to have jurisdiction also in certain cases where males are the litigants ; it was and is, I believe, still the practice, on application being made by both parties, to have cases transferred from the chief's to the Queen Mother's court where litigation is cheaper. The Queen Mother was entitled, I am informed, to a share of the court fees (oath fees) derived from cases heard in the chief's court.

The Queen Mother's share of oath fees at Bekwai was formerly as follows. The fee was divided into three parts ; one-third was allocated to the male stool, and of the remaining two-thirds, one-third was handed over to the woman's stool. The Queen Mother, as most of us know, has her own stool, but she is also custodian (with her stool officials) of the blackened stools of departed Queen Mothers, and she performs the rites in connexion with these at the *Wuku* and *Kwesi Adae* ceremonies.[2]

Every Queen Mother has to be in daily attendance at the chief's ' palace ', and should she not put in an appearance, the chief sends to inquire after her health every day that she is unable to attend.

At the ceremonies at which the departed ancestral ghosts are propitiated (the *Adae*), when the chief has completed the

[1] Every big chief for such an occasion, has a special stool made in readiness which is tended by the male stool carriers and kept in the male stool house, and this is, I believe, the only exception to the rule that no woman may sit upon the male stool.

[2] See Chapter V.

ceremony in the stool house and received his subjects, he may not return to his room until the Queen Mother has come to salute him, and if this old lady cares to do so she will keep him waiting for a considerable time before she puts in an appearance.

The Queen Mother had and still has in an ever-lessening degree, a great influence over all the women. She attends ceremonies connected with birth and puberty, and is (or was) personally concerned with the morals of the young generation. To-day the Queen Mothers are unrecognized by us and their position and influence are rapidly passing away. Many of us have only been made conscious of her presence by her 'troublesome' activities in stool palavers; some of us may have been in the habit of going out of our way to speak to the old lady, feeling rather than knowing she was a power to be reckoned with. Official recognition she has none.

I have myself been surprised at the results of my investigations. I found it difficult to believe what is here described is still in some measure alive to-day. I have asked the old men and women why I did not know all this—I had spent very many years in Ashanti. The answer is always the same: 'The white man never asked us this; you have dealings with and recognize only the men; we supposed the European considered women of no account, and we know you do not recognize them as we have always done.'

In other words, the Ashanti have simply accepted the fact that our system seemed to take no official cognizance of women as a power in the family and in the State, and therefore did not question our methods. Now I feel certain we have here a tremendous potential power for good in these old mothers of Africa; but I have no hesitation in saying that they have been a power working against us in the past. 'Do not listen to the white man, it is bad for you.' [1]

How could their influence have been used otherwise but against us when these shrewd old women saw the whole weight of our power apparently used against them, breaking up their former pride of place in society and the state?

I feel convinced that, without the expenditure of public funds, we could by some official recognition of the Queen Mothers do

[1] *West African Studies.*

more for the moral welfare of the Ashanti race than by the expenditure of many thousands of pounds on a campaign conducted through the medium of the comparatively small number of educated African women. They are, I believe, more out of touch with their uncivilized brothers and sisters and less able to understand them than a sympathetic and scientifically trained European with a knowledge of the vernacular. I believe if we were to recognize the Queen Mothers we could do much to combat infant mortality and the slow collapse of the former rigid moral standards. In the course of my investigations I have entered into details concerning child-bearing with these shrewd and lovable old women, and from what they tell me I am convinced we could, with their help and influence, introduce some of the more elementary methods of hygiene and thus inaugurate a campaign against dirt and tetanus, two factors which take a heavy annual toll of infant life. But this opportunity is passing away. The inquirer is told on every side of the indifference of the young to discipline and to self-control. Surely if we—that is, the Government—do not in some small measure give the respect and honour that has always been the Queen Mothers' right—and the Queen Mother is to an Ashanti the personification of motherhood—we cannot be surprised if her children follow our example.

Some recognition of this kind would, I believe, mark an epoch in African administration, and the results for good would be very great.

If, however, we really wish to break up the clan system, then we are doing the right thing by ignoring the position of these women, for they are the keystone of the whole structure.

I can only say that the clan system, as seen in Ashanti, is for the present the main check on immorality and the best stimulus to filial piety, and the respect due to elders and superiors.

The clan system may, nay, must, die out in course of time. That this time has not yet come, seems clear to all who have studied this people.

IV

RELIGION (*Introductory*)

It is proposed in the following chapters, and under the above heading, to examine certain rites that I have witnessed, first, in connexion with the cult of ancestors, and secondly, in connexion with Ashanti beliefs in non-human spiritual powers. In the latter category are included all deities, from the Supreme Being, 'Nyame or Nyankopon, who dwells somewhat aloof in His firmament, down to those to whom He delegates some of His powers, as His vice-regents upon Earth. There are the lesser gods, who in their turn are graded in a regular descending scale, until they reach, or at times almost merge into, that class which the Ashanti themselves name *suman*, who are among the lowest grades of superhuman powers.

I have given elsewhere [1] some accounts of ceremonies, which afford us examples of animism in its simpler forms. Space forbids the inclusion of extracts from accounts of other customs—which will be described perhaps in a later volume—dealing with birth, puberty, and death, and will serve to throw still further light upon religious beliefs. The object aimed at throughout is to present accurate records of what is actually done and actually said at such of the Ashanti religious ceremonies as I have thus far examined.

Later, when more material of this nature has been collected, I, or perhaps others more skilled in critical analysis, may be enabled to draw up a formula which will present to our minds the true nature of the religious beliefs of this wonderful people. These beliefs have for centuries been described as 'fetishism' or 'fetish worship', but the religious conceptions of the Twi-speaking peoples of the Gold Coast and of Ashanti have, in my opinion, been grievously misrepresented.

The reasons which have led to this misunderstanding are not difficult to trace.

[1] See the account of how a drum is made, Chap. XXII, and a stool, Chap. XXIV.

I have suggested, in the preface of this volume, that our information concerning the anthropology of this part of Africa has hitherto been almost wholly derived from two main sources :

(*a*) Information from educated Africans, who have generously placed at the disposal of the European inquirer facts they themselves knew, or had acquired from their own countrymen, and

(*b*) Information obtained by Europeans themselves from uneducated Africans (i.e. uneducated according to European standards)—this information being solicited from these ' bush ' or ' raw ' natives through the medium of an interpreter.

The educated African, however, has been cut off from, and is out of sympathy with, the life of his own people. He has learned in nine cases out of ten, if he has not actually been taught, to despise his own illiterate brethren and the unlettered past of his race. Concerning that past he really knows little or nothing, and generally cares less. Bosman, writing two hundred years ago, mentions ' the negro who ridiculed his own country's gods '. If, as is probable, he has been educated in one of the mission schools, then his whole training, until quite recently, has been one in which it has not appeared orthodox or even conceivable to his teachers that there might be something in the African's own culture and religious beliefs worthy of retention side by side (for a time at least) with the greater, because higher, ethical teachings of Christian theology.[1]

Such being the case, can one wonder that African pupils and converts alike have been quick to see and very ready to follow

[1] One of the most remarkable facts that must have struck many laymen in Africa, is that the missionary, to whom anthropologists owe such a vast debt, should not in the past have made more *practical use* of their knowledge in their own everyday work. This fact is well exemplified in the case of the late (German) Basel Mission in the Gold Coast, which claimed among its missionaries a man with such a store of ethnological learning as the late J. G. Christaller. Yet among their converts I have met only one who gave a thought to or was interested in his own old religious beliefs. I have never heard in the past of use being made in the Basel Mission schools of any of the great truths which will be found common to the West African and Christian religion. All this is being rectified now, and with men like Mr. Wilkie and Mr. Beveridge at its head, the Scottish Mission will do work which is being built upon surer foundations than under the former German régime, because it does not neglect or ignore the peculiar genius of the race among whom it labours.

a trend of thought which denied, or ignored, the possibility of anything useful or good or ethical existing in the African's own religion.

The result has been that the cultured and the semi-educated Africans alike (with a few exceptions), when asked about the beliefs of their own people, unconsciously paint them in all the unreal and exotic colours with which their new training and their new environment have taught them to regard them.

They feel, and they have been trained to believe, that they are brands plucked from the burning. It is almost impossible that such persons can be sympathetic with their own past, a past which after all few of them have ever really known, seen, or clearly understood.

With regard to the second source of our European misinformation—the uneducated African—who is examined by the white man through the medium of an interpreter, such methods of dealing with a delicate and difficult subject like religion are, in my own opinion, and from my own experience, equally unsatisfactory.

Inquiries conducted on such lines will either lead to almost wholly negative results or, what is as bad, the information so gained will again be tinged by just the same half-truths as the material obtained from the former source which it thus seems to corroborate. The wrong atmosphere is once again imparted by the educated or semi-educated interpreter, who will unconsciously give answers, couched in the only phraseology which he knows, with which he has been familiar since he first began to learn to read and write.

The old expert, the custodian of the past lore of his race, whose head is full of wisdom undreamed of in the seventh standard board-school philosophy of the interpreter, is never going to open that storehouse at the bidding of a stranger and foreigner, with whom he has to converse through such a medium.

The interpreter very often has not even heard many of the words that these old folk employ in the recounting of ceremonies and rites. These gaps he fills up by words which he will borrow from his own very limited and often misapplied English vocabulary. Any success that the European may hope to obtain in

gaining really valuable information from these old men and old women is attained by other methods.

He must first gain their fullest confidence, and inspire their trust and affection. He must make them believe that his interest in them is not one of idle curiosity or kindly superiority, nor yet again merely inspired by love of knowledge. I approached these old people and this difficult subject (their religious beliefs) in the spirit of one who came to them as a seeker after truths, the key to which I told them they alone possessed, which not all the learning nor all the books of the white man could ever give to me.

I made it clear to them that I asked access to their religious rites such as are here described for this reason. I attended these ceremonies with all the reverence and respect I could accord to something which I felt to have been already very old, before the religion of my country had yet been born as a new thought; yet not so entirely new, but that even its roots stretched back and were fed from that same stream which still flows in Ashanti to-day.

The stream crosses the path,
The path crosses the stream;
Which of them is the elder?
Did we not cut a path to go and meet this stream?
The stream had its origin long, long ago,
It had its origin in the Creator.
He created things,
Pure, pure Tano.[1]

Before I leave this subject, and pass on to a description of the rites witnessed, I should like to point out yet a third factor which has been a further source of error in the proper understanding of West African religion. This factor arises directly from the causes already noted.

In a land where, even now only a few Europeans are able to speak the language of its people, it was inevitable that inappropriate European words should have been employed to describe objects and actions, the real significance of which was never fully examined or understood.

Such words in time became adopted and adapted by those

[1] Extract from the language of the talking drums. See Chap. XXII.

Africans themselves, who learned English or Dutch or Portuguese from the European, and in turn were used again by them when interpreting. Many such words, originally employed in a wholly wrong sense, have become, by long use, almost classical. One example is ' linguist ', meaning ' spokesman ', and few perhaps of such mistakes really matter. But there is one term the indiscriminate use of which, I believe, has done infinite harm, the word ' fetish '. The story of its origin and introduction into West Africa is so well known that I need not here repeat it.

This term will confront and befog the inquirer who is ignorant of the vernacular, at every turn. It will appear as exactly to fit some aspects of Ashanti religious beliefs, as to be totally inapplicable to others, to which, however, it will be as commonly applied.

I laboured in this terminological maze until I came very carefully to examine the distinction and nomenclature that the African himself observes in classifying two distinct aspects of his religious beliefs.

Broadly speaking, all these objects which we ourselves would loosely call charms, amulets, talismans, mascots, or fetishes, he calls *suman*,[1] and I think that the word ' fetish ' should be rigidly confined to designate such only.

His other category of non-human spirits, which he himself calls *abosom*, which he clearly distinguishes from the *suman*, we should never call ' fetishes ', for it is a totally inappropriate and misleading term.

The only correct word to use for the Ashanti word *obosom*[2] is ' god ' or, when speaking of the brass pan itself, which is the potential resting place of this non-human spirit, ' a shrine '. I spell this word (god) throughout with a small letter, and only use the capital when the Ashanti is speaking of 'Nyame, the

[1] The African with his charm or fetish is infinitely more logical and sensible in his ideas and application of such than is the European with his or her mascot. The African knows why his *suman* should have power and whence that power is derived. We do not, I am afraid, show the same intelligent interest when we buy a gollywog to fasten on our fuselage, and attribute our luck in not having ' crashed ' to its magical power.

[2] No connexion whatever, as Ellis states, with the word for moon, which is a totally distinct word and has a different dictionary meaning because it has different tones. See article on the Drum Language, Chap. XXII.

God of the Sky, who is to him the Supreme Being of the Universe.

The native pastor and the European missionary alike found a word already in universal use, i. e. 'fetish'. They were possibly quite ready to welcome a designation which obviated any necessity for using a term which, even when written with a small initial letter, they considered much too good to apply to these 'false gods'[1] about whom we really still know so little.

Thus West Africa became 'the Land of Fetish'[2] and its religion 'Fetishism'.

It would be as logical to speak in these terms of the religion of ancient Greece and Rome, pulling down from their high places the Olympian Deities and δαίμονες—Daemons—(those which were the souls of men who lived in the Golden Age, and those which were never incarnate in human form, but were gods created by the Supreme God), and branding all indiscriminately as 'fetishes', and the great thinkers of old, e. g. Plato and Socrates, as fetish worshippers. 'I owe a cock to Aesculapius,' said the latter almost with his last breath, and this pious injunction to his friend would be understood by every old Ashanti to-day.

[1] Bosman used it two hundred years ago, for he constantly holds forth against their 'false gods'.

[2] Ellis actually published a book with this title, but later must have seen his mistake, for he writes in another of his works 'so far from fetishism being peculiarly characteristic of the religion of the negro of the Gold Coast, I am of opinion that that religion is remarkably free from it'.

V

RELIGION

A Wednesday Adae *Ceremony*

The first in order of importance of those customs dealing with the propitiation, solicitation, or worship of ancestral spirits is the *Adae*. This word is possibly just a special application of the same word *adae*, meaning a place of rest, or lying down—no one is permitted to work or go to farm on an *Adae*.

In the special sense in which it is here employed, it refers to those ceremonies at which the spirits of the departed rulers of the clan are propitiated, their names and deeds recalled, and favours and mercy solicited.

After the death of a wise ruler, if it be desired to perpetuate his or her name and memory, the late owner's 'white' stool is 'smoked' or blackened by being smeared all over with soot, mixed with yolk of egg. It then becomes a black stool (*apunnua*), and is deposited in the stool house (*akonnua dan*), and becomes a treasured heirloom (*agyapadie*) of that clan. The stool, which during the life-time of its possessor was so intimately bound (literally and metaphorically speaking) with its owner's *sunsum* or soul,[1] thus becomes after death a shrine into which the departed spirit may again be called upon to enter on certain special occasions, such as those about to be described, that it may receive that adulation and those gifts that were dear to it in life, and so be induced to continue to use its new and greater spiritual influence in the interest of those over whom it formerly ruled when upon earth.

The *Adae* ceremony, universally held throughout Ashanti, is a rite which is observed twice in every successive period of forty-three days. The two ceremonies are known as the Big or Sunday *Adae* (*Adae kese* or *Kwesidae*), and the Wednesday *Adae*, *Wukudae* (also sometimes known as the *Kupadakuo*, and among the Brong as *Muruwukuo*). The interval between one Sunday *Adae* and the next Sunday *Adae* is 43 days, and a like

[1] Fetters are put on a stool with the idea of binding to it the owner's soul. (See Chap. XXIV, The Silver Stool.)

time also elapses between each Wednesday *Adae*. The period between one Sunday *Adae* and the following Wednesday *Adae* is 22 days, exclusive, or 24 inclusive, and between the Wednesday *Adae* and the next Sunday *Adae* 17 or 19 days, exclusive and inclusive, respectively.

To give a concrete example : a Sunday *Adae* fell at the town of B—— on the 24th July 1921 ; the next Sunday *Adae* would be on the 4th September. The Wednesday *Adae*, following the *Adae* of the 24th July, fell upon the 17th August.

The reason for these curious recurrent 43-day periods, so marked in many ceremonials, and known among the Ashanti as *adaduanan*, lit. 40-day periods, will, I think, be explained when later their calendar comes to be discussed.

The day immediately preceding any *Adae* is known as *Adapa*, lit. a good or lucky day. A child born upon such a day has this word suffixed to his or her own natal-day name; e.g. a male child born upon a Tuesday immediately preceding a Wednesday *Adae* would be named Kobina Dapa.

The *Adapa* is spent in preparation for the following day's ceremony ; food, firewood, water, wine, &c., are collected, because, as already noted, on an *Adae* no work other than that connected with the ceremony, may be performed. No *Adae* ceremony has, I believe, ever before been witnessed, in its entirety, by a European. A very brief description is given by Bowdich, recording an *Adae* held in Coomassie about the beginning of the eighteenth century,[1] and an even briefer account is sketched by Ellis.[2] I am here, as elsewhere, greatly indebted to the native rulers in Ashanti for their courtesy and trust in according to me the privilege of unrestricted access to these sacred and deeply significant rites. I propose now to describe, in some detail, four separate *Adae* customs, even at the risk of repeating in an account of one what may have already been recorded in describing another. The ceremonies here specified were performed in localities separated from each other by many days' journey ; they were rites of totally different clans, and finally a considerable interval of time elapsed between their performance.

[1] Bowdich, *Mission to Ashanti*, pp. 230–1.
[2] *The Twi-Speaking Peoples of Gold Coast*, pp. 228–9.

Wukudae, witnessed on the 17th August 1921.

On the morning of the 16th, the 'white' stool of the paramount chief (*omanhene*), and his chair (*asipim*), were scrubbed by the stool-carriers in the court-yard of the 'palace', and the cooks (*sodofo*) likewise thoroughly cleansed the calabashes to be used at the next day's ceremony. A sheep was chosen; the townsfolk laid in a store of food, firewood, water, &c. The chief personally arranged about the proper supplies of palm wine, rum, and whisky, and his treasurer (the *sanahene*) counted out the money and weighed out the gold dust required for the occasion. All this is called *akonta*[1] *buo*, or reckoning up accounts. I have many a time noticed how thoroughly the chiefs and Queen Mothers go into these details, which possibly explains the smooth running of every ceremony I have attended.

On the evening of the *Adapa* the drummers and horn-blowers assembled, and almost every variety of these instruments was to be seen. There were *ntumpane*, or talking drums, *boma*, *nkawiri*, *mpebi*, *akukuadwi*, *kete*, *mpintin*, *aprede* (also known as *nimsa*, lit. 'Had I known'), *asenkuo*, *agyankotoankama-amane*, and *nyaranie*, drums (*vide* Figs. 20–22).

Of the elephant horns there were *nkufe*, *ntahera*, *asokoben*. Then, as Bowdich wrote a hundred years ago, 'music and firing beguile the night'. The significance of the notes of some of these drums will be explained later. About nine o'clock the following morning every one concerned assembled in the small court-yard inside the chief's palace. This yard was flanked on the right by the very beautiful old '*Nyame dan* or temple to the great God of the sky (*vide* Frontispiece). At the other end of the yard was the open side of the usual three-walled Ashanti house, and opening off this, on the right, was a low door leading into the stool house. This door may just be seen (in Fig. 26) over the heads of the people. The head stool-carrier (*akonnuasoafo hene*), a most important person in an Ashanti court, and like other stool-carriers generally recognizable by the manner in which the hair of his head was cut (*vide* Fig. 32), unlocked this door and we all entered a very small room, so dark, how-

[1] Portuguese, *conta*.

FIG. 20. Drummers at an *Adae* ceremony

FIG. 21. Drummers at an *Adae* ceremony

Fig. 22. Elephant horn blowers at an *Adae* ceremony

Fig. 23. Scene at an *Adae* ceremony

ever, that I could not at first distinguish anything. The following were the persons admitted besides myself :

(*a*) The chief (*omanhene*).
(*b*) A spokesman (*okyeame*).
(*c*) A gun-bearer (*tumitufo*).
(*d*) A sword-bearer (*okafonafo*).
(*e*) A herald (*osene*) (see Fig. 23).
(*f*) Several members of the chief's household (*dabrefo*).

The chief and all present were dressed in their oldest cloths. On entering the room the chief bared his shoulder and slipped his sandals from off his feet, standing upon them (marks of respect accorded by an inferior to a superior). He greeted the spirits, saying : *Nananom samanfo makye o* ('Spirit grandfathers, good morning'). He then seated himself upon his stool.

As soon as my eyes grew accustomed to the light, I saw at the end of the room, opposite to the door, a long low platform, raised about three feet off the ground, made of upright poles with cross sticks laid upon them. Upon this table or rack were set the ancestral stools, as yet invisible, for all were covered with one large coarsely woven native cloth called *nsa*. The head stool-carrier came forward and removed the covering. There were thirteen blackened stools, many crumbling to pieces with age. Each stool lay upon its side, the seat facing towards us. They were caked with clotted blood,[1] and pieces of fat could be seen round the centre supports of many of them. (For photographs of smoked stools, see Figs. 34 and 35, which were those at another *Adae*)

The thirteen stools were in three rows. Two brass bells were the only other contents of the room.

A small pot of water was now brought into the room and poured out into a jar. I was told later that this water had been drawn very early that morning from the stream by an old

[1] It may be as well to place upon record the fact that the blood with which these ancestral stools are clotted was never that of a human sacrifice as is so often erroneously supposed. An Ashanti whom I once questioned on this point asked me how I could ask such a foolish question when I knew well that the flesh of the sacrifice was afterwards partaken of. There is one apparent but not real exception, the stool (*not an ancestral stool*) brought from Gyaman by Yim Aware which was really a *suman* or fetish. Upon this formerly a mulatto's blood was sprinkled. Nowadays a *brown* sheep is sacrificed upon it and the flesh is *not* eaten by those taking part in the ceremony.

woman who had passed the menopause. In olden times, if any menstruous woman entered the room where the ancestral stools were kept she would have been killed immediately.

The head stool-carrier then picked up this jar and, going to the door, poured water upon the ground with the words: *Nana Eguayeboafo mongye nsu nhoho mo nsa* ('Grandfather Eguayeboafo (all) receive this water and wash your hands').

A dish of *eto* (in this case mashed plantains) was now brought in by one of the *sodofo* (cooks). The chief stool-carrier, taking a spoonful of this, handed it to the chief, who, rising up, again slipped his sandals from his feet and stripped his cloth from his shoulder, tucking it round his waist. He then placed the contents of the spoon upon the oldest stool, speaking the following words:

'*Me nananom nsamanfo, nne ye Awukudae, mo me gye eto nni, na mo ma kuro yi nye yiye, na mo ma mma nwo mma, na nnipa a ye wo kuro yi mu nhina nya sika.*'

'My spirit grandfathers, to-day is the Wednesday *Adae*, come and receive this mashed plantain and eat; let this town prosper; and permit the bearers of children to bear children; and may all the people who are in this town get riches.'

This speech was punctuated throughout by the deep exclamation of *yo!*[1] from the *okyeame* ('linguist' or spokesman) and shrill cries of *Tie! Tie! Tie! Tie-e-e-e!*[2] from the *osene* (the herald). Only in the case of the oldest stool was the actual name of the ancestor mentioned; when the *eto* was placed upon the other stools no names were called. What remained of the plantain in the dish was next sent outside the room and scattered over the ground for the attendant spirits of the stool-carriers of these dead kings.

The sheep was now brought into the room amid loud cries of *Tie! Tie! Tie!* It was carried slung across the shoulders and neck of one of the cooks.

The chief again rose up and, holding a small knife (*kuroto*), addressed the spirits in the same words he had previously used when he laid the *eto* on the stools, but substituting the word *oguane* (sheep) for *eto* (plantain).

[1] *Yo*, really should be spelled *vo*, this *v* having a peculiar *wy* sound and being really a labial semi-vowel.

[2] *Tie* (listen).

Fig. 24. The blood being collected in a wooden bowl

Fig. 25. Threading the meat on wooden skewers

Fig. 26. The meat on the skewers being carried into the stool house

Fig. 27. Twins who were present at the *Adae*

Two cooks now held a cloth, to serve as an apron or screen, between the chief and the sheep. The sheep was tightly held by several men, while the chief stabbed its throat. A little blood was allowed to fall upon the floor, after which a wooden bowl (*kurowa*) was held under its neck, and the sheep carried outside at once, where its throat was cut, the blood being received in the wooden bowl (see Fig. 24).

The carcase was then laid upon a plank of wood that had been cut, not sawn, out of a log, and was quickly and skilfully cut up. The basin of blood was meanwhile carried back into the stool house and the blood smeared, with the hand, upon the seat and edge of each stool in turn. This was done by the stool-carriers, and no words were spoken.

The omentum or covering of fat on the lower intestines was next placed on the centre support of each stool. The men cutting up the sheep were meanwhile threading (*sina*) choice pieces of the meat upon small skewers (*mfoho*), three pieces upon each skewer [1] (see Fig. 25). These were sent outside to be roasted by being placed upon the hot embers of a fire at the house of the head stool-carrier's wife. They were then brought back, laid upon a wooden dish, and taken into the stool house (see Fig. 26).

The head of the sacrifice and pieces of the intestines were also taken into the room and laid on the ground in front of the stools.

A bell was now rung 'to show that the spirits were eating or about to eat'. The skewers of roasted meat were now placed upon each stool by the chief, who again stripped naked down to the waist; the *sodofo* (cooks) followed close behind him placing upon each a little pile of fragments of lung. As the *omanhene* passed from stool to stool he kept saying, 'Here is meat, receive and eat', the herald, after each sentence, shouting *Tie! Tie!*

After the offering of the cooked and uncooked meat had been arranged upon all the stools, a bottle of whisky was produced. Some of this was poured out by one of the sword-carriers into a very old brass cup, shaped like a wine-glass. This was first handed to the *osene* (herald) to drink—it is the time-immemorial privilege of all *asene* to be the first to touch the wine cup.

The herald having drunk, and the cup having been replenished,

[1] These skewers are made from a wood called *tweapea*, from which tooth-brushes or chewing-sticks are cut.

the chief stool-carrier commenced from the first stool to pour a few drops of the spirit upon each in turn, speaking the following words. [Every few words were followed by *Ye! Ye!* from the *okyeame* (spokesman) and the piercing *Tie! Tie!* of the herald, which rendered it impossible to hear correctly the individual name of each departed ancestor; I have therefore substituted '*Asumasi*' (So-and-so)—after the first name—for the actual name of the departed king.]

'*Nana Eguayeboafo nsa o. B—— fo nkwaso, nne Oberemi som na aba, mma yenfom Aban; na die obeye kuro yi so, mmusuo no ebo ne konkon so.*

'*Nana Asumasi nsa o, nana Asumasi nsa o, nana Asumasi nsa o, w'adaworoma kuro yi nkwaso; nana Asumasi nsa o, mma asem bone mma kuro yi mu, nana Asumasi nsa o; na B—— 'hene nkyere akonnua yi so, nana Asumasi nsa o, mma asem bone mma kuro yi mu, B—— fo nkwaso; nana Asumasi nsa o——*'

And so on to the last of the thirteen stools.[1]

'Grandfather Eguayeboafo, your wine, life to the people of B——; these days, service to the white man has come; do not let us offend the Castle (i.e. the Government); for one who would wish evil on this town, let misfortune fall upon his own neck. Grandfather So-and-so, your wine; Grandfather So-and-so, your wine; Grandfather So-and-so, your wine; by your kindness let this town have life; Grandfather So-and-so, your wine; let no bad matter come upon this town; Grandfather So-and-so, your wine; permit the chief of B—— to remain long upon his stool; Grandfather So-and-so, do not permit any bad matter to come upon this town; life to the people of B——; Grandfather So-and-so, your wine'—and so on.

The remainder of the whisky was now passed round and partaken of by all present; and last of all the *omanhene* (chief) told the spirits that a white man had come to give greetings and pay his respects to them. This completed the ceremony in the stool house.

The offerings, I was informed, remained upon the stools till evening, when they would be removed by the stool-carriers—the apron of fat alone being left.

[1] An actual phonograph record of this address to the ghosts was later made by the actors in this drama (after an offering of two sheep to the spirits for permission to call upon them). Even in the record, however, owing to the cries of the herald and the shouts of the spokesman, it is impossible to distinguish actual names.

The sheep's head became the perquisite of the head stool-carrier, and might be removed by him to his house. Of the meat on the skewers, one skewer is given to the chief who must eat the meat upon it. The meat upon the remaining twelve skewers was, I was informed, eaten by (*a*) the stool-carriers or (*b*) by their children.

The chief now retired to dress. It has been noted he was in his old cloths. He later told me it would not be fitting for an inferior to go into the presence of his superiors—the spirits—in fine attire.

Before I give details of the public reception which now took place in the main street, some points of interest may be noted in connexion with the ceremony just described.

The twins (seen in Fig. 27) were present in the court-yard, outside the stool-house. Twins in Ashanti, if both of the same sex, belong, as of right, to the chief, and become, if girls, his potential wives, if boys, elephant-tail switchers at the court. They must be shown to him as soon as possible after birth, being carried to the ' palace ' in a brass basin. Twins, on state occasions, are dressed in white, each alike.

It will have been noted that throughout the whole of the ceremony described there is no apparent invocation or mention of any power or spirit other than those of human ancestors—no gods or fetishes are called upon. This, as will be seen later, seems in marked contrast to the *Adae* described in Northern Ashanti. Behind the twins and upon the ground may be noticed something looking like a bundle of quills. This is the Gyabom *suman* (Gyabom fetish). It is a powerful charm for driving away evilly disposed disembodied human spirits. At a festival like the *Adae*, all spirits, good and bad, are expected to be present, but the bad spirits, the revengeful spirits (*sasa*), will flee from the presence of this *suman* (fetish), which consists of a bundle of porcupine quills, a bunch of feathers of the fish-eagle (whose cry, the hunter will tell you, is *'gye 'tuo, 'gye 'wo* (only a gun and a snake I fear)), the skull of a porcupine, several human maxillae, an *odawuru* (gong), and leaves of a shrub called *emme*. All these ingredients, as will be seen from a careful examination of the photograph, Fig. 27, are placed in an old brass bowl, in workmanship and ornamentation very like the

kuduo (bowls), which will be briefly described later.[1] All these objects had been dyed a deep red colour by pouring over them a concoction made of the powdered bark of a tree, (called by the natives *adwino*,) mixed with eggs. This dye is known all over Ashanti as *esono*, and is a substitute for human blood, for in olden times this fetish was washed with blood. In those days, when a man was to be executed the Gyabom was set upon his knees, while his head was cut off by cutting through the spinal column at the nape of the neck. This was to prevent the *sasa* (revengeful spirit) of his victim from returning to wreak vengeance on his executioner or upon the king who had ordered the execution.

A human sacrifice, (one of the very few exceptions to the rule that human sacrifices were only made with the idea that the spirit so released might be set free to serve another human spirit), was occasionally made upon the Gyabom fetish. My informant told me how he had, only twenty years ago, seen a child sacrificed upon this very fetish. His body was cut open from the throat down to the abdomen, the intestines pulled out, the sides of the body folded back, and the corpse laid face down upon the *suman*, which thus became saturated with its blood. The jaw-bones of a person executed, later to become the perquisite of the executioner, were always left a few days upon this *suman* to drive away any possible *sasa* hovering about them.

The chief took about forty-five minutes to dress and change into his robes of state, and this interval was filled by the old drummer, Osai Kojo, talking on his two *ntumpane* drums, and telling all who could understand their language the history of that particular division.

I have given elsewhere in this volume an account of the talking drums and of the drum language, and I shall here quote only a few verses of what the drums were saying on this occasion at B——. It must, of course, be understood that I did not follow at the time one-tenth of what they were recounting. I later spent many weeks with the old drummer, working out syllable by syllable, and tone by tone, what is here given in an English translation only.

[1] Chap. XXV.

The Drums.

Oh, Divine Drummer, I am scarcely awake and have risen up.
I, the Ashanti porcupine chief's drummer,
I am scarcely awake,
I have made myself to rise up,
I am about to sound the drum.
If you have gone elsewhere and I call you,
Come;
The fowl has crowed in the morning,
The fowl has awakened and crowed,
Very early,
They are addressing me and I shall understand.

He then called upon the spirit of the cedar-tree and of the elephant, parts of which had gone towards the making of the composite drum. The following verse is a variation of that used at Mampon.

There are swamps, swamps, swamps,
Which can swallow up the elephant.
A river may lie small in the valley
Between great hills.
But it flows on for ever and ever.
If you (spirit of the elephant) have gone elsewhere and I call upon you,
Come.
The fowl has crowed in the morning, &c.

He then called upon the spirit of the tree from which the fibre is made that holds down the tympanum of elephant hide.

I lay down, but I did not feel sleepy,
I lay down but my eyes did not close,
For three watches of the night.
I think about my friends who have left me and are asleep,
Amoafo—Awuku—the cock—the old bird whose bones have grown strong.
Fowl, good morning, good morning,
The fowl has crowed, &c., &c.

The sky is wide, wide, wide,
The earth is wide, wide, wide,
The one was lifted up,
The other was set down,
In ancient times, long, long ago.

Supreme Sky God, upon whom men lean and fall not,
We serve you.
When the Sky God shows you anything
May you profit by it.
If we wish 'white' we get it,
If we wish 'red' we get it.
Him upon whom we lean and do not fall,
God, good morning.
You whom we serve upon a Saturday,
Good morning.
The fowl crowed, &c., &c.

He then discoursed about the herald 'with his black monkey-skin cap' who 'carries his own stool'. He continued in praise of the great god, Tano, to be described later.

The stream crosses the path,
The path crosses the stream;
Which of them is the elder?
Did we not cut a path to go and meet this stream?
The stream had its origin long, long ago,
The stream had its origin in the Creator.
He created things,
Pure, pure Tano [the great god of the Ashanti].
Come here, Tano;
He devours rams,
Ta, the great one, the powerful one
Whom we serve upon a Monday.

And again:

He is coming, he is coming,
Little by little, slowly, slowly.
Be careful not to stumble,
Little by little, slowly, slowly.
You will come and sit down,
Chief, you will come and sit down.
Kon! Kon! Kon!
The great man, Osai's son, has sat down,
The King has sat down,
He who destroys towns has sat down,
He who never forgives,
He has taken a stool and sat down.

And so on, ending with:

The King is going to rise,
The destroyer of towns is about to rise.

Rise !
Rise !
Rise !
Little by little !
Carefully ! Carefully !
Take care you do not stumble.[1]
King, let us forward.

While the old drummer was drumming out the piece from which the above extract is taken, messengers were coming in from without bidding the chief to hasten as every one was waiting for him. To keep other people (of lesser importance than yourself) waiting is essentially the correct court etiquette in Ashanti.

At length the *omanhene* came out, dressed in one of the magnificent cloths woven on the primitive looms of the country, and heavily adorned with gold ornaments, his hands and fingers so bedecked with massive rings and bracelets that he could hardly lift his arms.

He stepped from his room closely followed by the two *kwadwumfo*, those wonderful minstrels who, on state occasions, drone like a hive of bees, into the king's ears, the names and deeds of dead kings and queens, as far back as their traditional history has any record.

He listened as they sang, with his heart full of sadness for the dead. The chief's head was bound with a fillet of velvet inlaid with gold. As he stepped out of the court-yard he was met at the ' palace ' gate by young ' royals ', bearing ostrich-feather plumes, state swords, the handles bound with leopard hide and gold leaf, children with tails of elephants, his linguists with gold and silver staves, his treasurers holding enormous bunches of iron keys, sandal-bearers carrying spare sandals, *mpintine* drummers and the *kyeniefiafo* (umbrella-carriers) carrying the immense silk and velvet umbrellas under which, as these revolve and dance, he is escorted to his place and ' very slowly ', ' very carefully ', lest he ' stumble ', he seated himself at the apex of a double lane, composed of these young ' royals ' (young

[1] In olden times it was considered extremely unlucky for the King of Ashanti to stumble, should he do so, a slave was immediately killed on that spot. On great occasions an attendant lifted and set down his feet for the King, lest he should stumble and fall down.

princes of the blood) and other high court officials (see Figs. 21–3). Behind him stood the *kwadwumfo* (minstrels), his linguists, gun-bearers, executioners, &c., and a place was reserved on his left for the ' Queen Mother '.

The big talking drums were immediately behind him and beat out :

The King has sat down,
The destroyer of towns has sat himself down,
The powerful one, &c., &c.

Every one, from the youngest child present, knew exactly his place and fell into it without fuss and without an order. No women were among the select throng.

Down the dense lane of drummers, fan-bearers, and elephant-tail switchers marched one by one the sub-chiefs who had come to do homage to the stool ; [1] slipping their sandals from their feet and baring the left shoulder, they bowed from the waist, saying : ' Grandfather, good morning ', and retired, making way for another. The chief acknowledged their salutations by the slightest possible inclination of his head, and with an expression absolutely impassive and unmoved.

After the local sub-chiefs, and his chiefs from outlying villages, who had come in for the ceremony, had all greeted their paramount chief, every one seated himself upon his stool in the place appointed to him, in virtue of his rank or position in the army.

The state officials called *fotosafo* or *petufo*, carrying bottles of rum and whisky, now marched up to the chief, who ordered the distribution among those assembled.

When all had partaken, the *twafo 'hene* (leader of the advance guard) came forward, and bowing, said : ' Grandfather, I thank you, you who bathe Bosommuru.' [2] Then all gave thanks.

The chief might not, however, retire to his room or eat any food until the Queen Mother came to greet him. This very important lady, fully conscious of her own proud position in the state, might in her turn possibly keep him waiting. She meanwhile had been performing her *Adae*, which will be described in the next chapter.

[1] I am informed that in olden times if the King were ill or absent obeisance would be paid to the empty stool itself.

[2] His *ntoro* ; *vide Ntoro* Exogamous Divisions, Chap. II.

VI

RELIGION

A Queen Mother's Adae *Ceremony.*

The Queen Mother of B—— is a personality and a celebrity in her own country. In one of the wars between B—— and J—— she had voluntarily sold herself as a slave to the mother of King Prempeh in exchange for some kegs of gunpowder which were used by the army. She is still the proud possessor of a cloth given her by her late mistress.

The following is a literal translation of what she told me concerning her *Adae*, which I did not myself witness.

My stool-carriers (who are women) prepare *eto* (mashed yams or plantains) and fish from the lake (Bosomtwe) and perhaps *otwe* (antelope) meat.

My head stool-carriers pour a little water upon the ground that the spirits may wash their hands.

I then take a spoon and place the *eto* upon each stool.

There are seven Queen Mothers' blackened stools in my stool house. Not every Queen Mother who dies has a stool blackened for her, for should a Queen Mother have a great number of such stools in her charge, and should war come and she should have to fly, they would be a great encumbrance and she might not be able to save them all.

As I place the *eto* upon the stools I address my ancestors, saying :

'Give me health and strength, and give health also to the King of B——, and to the people of B——, and to the women of B——, and to strangers in the town. May the women bear children and the men gain riches. Any one who wishes evil to the town may that evil fall upon him.'

Of the *eto* that remains, my stool-carriers will place some upon any rock near the A—— river. When asked the reason for this, she said : 'Any stone or rock may after dark become the abode of a spirit.'

The meat is then placed upon the stools and wine is poured over them.

I then sit down and wait for the King to finish his *Adae*. The King may not go home until I have visited him, even should I delay for a long time. He will send for me, begging me to come quickly. When I go to him he gives me wine, and I first pour a little upon the ground, saying to the spirits :

'Health to the King,
Health to the Queen,
Health to the nation,
Let no bad thing come upon the town.'

No woman who has her menses may enter my stool house. If I were 'ill', my head stool-carrier would officiate for me. I do not eat any of the offerings placed upon the stools myself ; the children of the stool-carriers may do so. If any man or woman be impotent or barren, the remains of the offerings will enable them to beget or bear children.

VII

RELIGION

A Sunday Adae (Kwesidae) *witnessed on the 4th September* 1921.

The following was the order of events which followed very closely those already described in connexion with the Wednesday *Adae* at the same place.

(*a*) Preparations made on the previous day (*adapa*).

(*b*) On the morning of the ceremony an old woman brought a pot of water, and standing outside the ' palace ' waved it over her head, quickly inverted it, put it on the ground bottom upwards, and placed a stone upon it. This, I was informed, was to prevent any quarrelling or disagreement arising among those who attended the ceremony.

It will be seen elsewhere that this idea of a ' wave ' offering is universally known throughout Ashanti.

(*c*) A plate of yams, cut up, not mashed, and known as *pusa*, is placed on the ground beside the blackened stools.

(*d*) Water is poured upon the ground outside the stool house by the head stool-carrier, with the words : ' Ghost Grandfathers, to-day is the Sunday *Adae*, receive this water and wash your hands.'

(*e*) The yams are placed upon the stools by the chief, the head stool-carrier pointing out and naming stools for him in turn.

(*f*) The remainder of the yams are taken outside and scattered on the ground with the words : ' Slaves of the stool-carriers of old, this is yours.'

(*g*) A sheep is carried in, the throat is cut as already described, with the words : ' Ghost Grandsires, to-day is the Sunday *Adae*, and I give you a sheep from my hands ; do not let any bad thing at all come upon the town, and to him who wishes evil let it fall upon himself.

(*h*) The blood is allowed to drip upon the floor.

(*i*) The sheep is carried outside and cut up, as previously described.

(*j*) The blood is brought inside, in a basin, and smeared upon the stools; the meat upon the skewers and the lungs are placed upon each stool.

(*k*) Rum is poured upon the stools.

(*l*) A bell is rung.

(*m*) The chief retires to dress, and the remainder of the ceremony proceeds as before, but is attended by many more chiefs from all outlying villages.

(*n*) About 4 p.m. the chief is called by the drums, which say: 'Grandfather, come quickly.'

(*o*) He again seats himself in the public place (*sadwa*), and palm wine is passed round.

(*p*) About 5 p.m. he entered his hammock (*apakan*) and was carried to a glade in the forest, where the ceremony described in Chapter XXI, 'Land Tenure and Alienation', took place.

This completed the ceremony. I was told that no bad news must ever be broken to a chief on an *Adae*, and that formerly any one doing so would be killed.

VIII

RELIGION

A Wednesday Adae *Ceremony, witnessed on the 21st December* 1921.

This *Adae*, while varying in certain interesting details from those already described, was conducted with practically the same rites. Owing to the fact that the proper stool house was at the time under repairs, the ceremony was held in a room in a court-yard of the *omanhene's* (chief's) palace, and this circumstance enabled me to obtain the photographs which accompany this account. These, I venture to think, are of special interest and value, as they depict scenes never before witnessed by a European, and by only a select few among the Ashanti themselves. I am greatly indebted to the *omanhene* for his permission to take them.

I was in attendance at the 'palace' before the *omanhene* made his appearance. The drums called *nkawiri*, *ampebi*, and *fasafokoko* were being sounded in the court-yard, and presently the chief made his appearance, coming from the *dabere* (rest chamber) accompanied by two very young *kwadwumfo* (minstrels), who were singing their mournful duet in his ears.

He sat down in the court-yard, while the stool-carriers went up the big flight of stone steps to the upper story of the palace to fetch down the blackened stools, which were temporarily lodged there. While we were waiting, a ceremony, having no connexion with the *Adae* itself, took place, and this I shall describe here.

It consisted of the chief 'administering fetish' (to use the phraseology of the native interpreter) to a priest who had had a lawsuit with his nephew and had lost his case. By reason of the former's special position—as a priest—it was feared he might be tempted to retaliate on the nephew by soliciting the power of his god against him. The *omanhene* and his elders had therefore decided that he should go through the ceremony of *abosom*

nom, lit. ' drinking the gods '. A small bottle called *abosom toa* (the gods' phial), containing the liquid to be drunk, was produced. This water is generally made potent by having been poured either over a god or gods or possibly over a stool or some other article having special properties as being the shrine of some spirit, human or divine ; in the former case to invoke the power of the god, in the latter the assistance of the spirit of the dead. A little rum was added to the contents of the bottle. The mixture was then poured into a cup made by twisting cleverly together leaves of a tree called *adwin*.[1] The priest, who was to drink, now advanced his right foot and upon top of it the Mkwankwa chief placed his left foot. The priest then spoke as follows :

' *Se Fagyase a ware me yi, se nye die obeka akyere me na me ka, na se me de odo, me de otan, me de ka nkontomposem biara a, abosom yi a me re nom yi n'kum me.*'

' As Fagyase (his god) is wedded to me,[2] and if what he (i. e. the god) says is not what I shall tell, and if I make love or if I make hate the excuse for any falsehood, may the gods I am drinking slay me.'

The Mkwankwa chief then raised the cup of leaves three times to the priest's lips, until he had drained all the contents. A bell was rung over the man's head while he was drinking. The priest was then given a glass of rum. The chief who had administered the draught, said : *Se wanka nokware a, abosom yi nkum wo !* (' If you do not speak the truth may these gods slay you ! '). The priest replied : ' I swear the great oath that I shall speak the truth.' He was quivering from head to foot during the whole of this ordeal, which now ended.

Eight blackened stools were then carried past us, some upon the nape of the neck, others held in front, of the stool-carriers. Most of them had bells attached to ' the ears ', as the little knobs under the wings of the seat are called. They were carried into the *patom* or room with three walls, and arranged leaning

[1] Later, some seven days' journey from M—— I found this same leaf used for a similar purpose and also employed as one of the ingredients used in the making of shrines for the gods.

[2] Priests and priestesses talk of being ' wedded to ', and consider themselves ' the spouses ' of their gods.

Fig. 28. Greeting the spirits of ancestors at an *Adae*

Fig. 29. The sacrifice—held on the shoulder of an attendant

upon their bells, and beneath the oldest stool—that of a woman, the first ruler of the clan—was spread a piece of elephant hide.

The *ntumpane* (talking drums) now beat out.

Osai bra,	Osai [1] come,
Osai Bonsu bra,	Osai Bonsu come,
Osai ma woho meneso.	Osai make yourself to arise.

The chief now rose up and, followed by the blowers upon elephant horns, and the drums called *prempeh*, *nkawiri*, and *fasafokoko*, proceeded to the compound where the ceremony was to take place. He mounted the two steps leading to the open room where the stools were arranged, slipped his sandals from his feet, bared his left shoulder, and stooping over the stools spoke some words I could not catch, but which would almost certainly be a morning salutation to the spirits (see Fig. 28). He then sat down. The dear old Queen Mother, whose noble and kindly spirit has since joined those ancestors she that day came to honour, came in, greeted the spirits in like manner, and sat down beside her brother.

The court officials now began to assemble, heralds with colobus monkey-skin hats with gold disks in front, sword-bearers with gold-hilted state swords, ' linguists ' with rods covered with gold and silver leaf, executioners with bandoliers of leopard skin filled with little knives, the stool-carriers with their curiously-cut hair, and the *sodofo* (cooks). The chief, the Queen Mother, and other officials all now stood up and bent over the stools, the chief holding a glass containing rum from which he poured a few drops upon each stool, speaking the following words (see Fig. 29):

' *Nana Asiama Nyankopon nsa ni, wo ne mpanyimfo ngye nsa yi nom, ma me 'nkye, mo ma me ne mpanyimfo mmu 'man yi yiye, mo ma asomdwiye mm'ra 'man yi ne abrofo ntem.*'

' Grandmother Asiama [2] (who came) from the Sky God, here is wine, do you and the ancient ones receive this wine and drink ; permit me to have a long reign, make it that I and my councillors rule this people well, let there be peace between the white men and this nation.'

He and the Queen Mother then each sipped a little of the spirit.

[1] The name of the paramount chief.

[2] The first ruler of the Beretuo clan whom tradition says came from the sky, her name appears again in the drum history of Mampon.

The sheep was now carried up the steps to where the chief stood; he stabbed its throat with a pen-knife, and it was held above each stool so that a little blood flowed upon them. It was then carried below, held head downwards, its throat cut, and the blood collected in a bowl, being stirred all the time by the hand of one of the stool-carriers (see Fig. 30). The blood was next smeared over the stools by the stool-carriers (see Fig. 32), and while this was being done the sheep was cut up, having been laid upon a wooden door (see Fig. 31). The different parts of this sacrifice were put into separate bowls. The sheep's head was placed in front of the centre stool. Some pieces of meat were now passed up to the chief, who, holding them in his right hand, waved them three times over the heads of the assembled people, and then placed a piece upon each stool, saying the following words:

'*Mpanyimfo, Asiama Nyankopon mungye 'guan yi nni, ma me'nkye, mo ma man yi nye yiye, mo no nye basa basa.*'

'Ancient ones (and you) Asiama (who came from) the Sky God, receive this sheep and eat, permit me to have a long reign, let this nation prosper, do not let it act foolishly.'

He then poured some rum upon the ground in front of the centre stool (see Fig. 33) and then upon all the stools.

All the while the *kwadwumfo* (minstrels) were droning the names and attributes of each dead ruler.

This completed the ceremony; then we all rose and went outside, leaving the blackened stools with the head of the sacrifice in front, upon which rested two rods, gold and silver (see Figs. 34 and 35). One of the stool-carriers remained alone in attendance. The pile of crumbling stools with the offerings upon them, the head of the sacrifice, the curious angular fan belonging to the Queen Mother, seen in the corner, and the solitary attendant sitting as if carved out of black ivory, formed one of the most impressive sights I have ever been privileged to witness.

The usual reception was now held in public outside the 'palace', the chief, the late Queen Mother, and myself occupying the raised platform where all came to do homage to their King. The minstrels were again standing behind us, singing the sad story of the dead in whose honour we were assembled.

Fig. 30. The scene in the court-yard

Fig. 31. The sacrifice being cut up

Fig. 32. The stool-carriers smearing the blood of the sacrifice upon the stools

Fig. 33. The chief pouring out a libation in front of the central stool

IX

RELIGION

A Brong Adae *Ceremony.*

The *Adae* now to be described differs very considerably from those I attended at B—— and at M——, accounts of which have just been given.

This ceremony was witnessed at Tekiman, a town some seven days' journey, on foot, north-west of Coomassie and situated in the Brong country of Northern Ashanti.

The Brong are, in my opinion, undoubtedly a branch of the Akan stock, to which the Ashanti and the Fanti belong. They will be proved, I believe, upon further investigation, to be either the residue of a single migration from the north-west (the remainder of whom passed on southward, becoming the Ashanti proper) or just possibly a later migration of the same people, coming from the same direction as the first, all being driven—by causes at which we can now only guess—from the open lands of the north into the dense forest region that now lies between the fringe of the Sahara and the sea.

The Fanti again, I consider, are either a much later migration of these Brong—who passed round or through the earlier migration which had remained in Ashanti proper—and settled near the coast and became Fanti; or—more likely still—they are a branch of the first migration which peopled Ashanti, passed on to the coast, and severed connexion with their kinsmen. Much later, and almost within historical times, they were joined by a second wave of their people; of this we have an authentic record both in Fanti traditions and in those of the northern Brong.

The Brong were later conquered by the Ashanti and became vassals of the great Ashanti Confederacy. I have prefaced the account of the custom, now to be described, by this very brief note, because I wish to make it clear that I consider the similarity in Brong customs and language to those of Ashanti,

is not due to their conquest by the latter, but rather to the fact that these peoples sprang from a common stock.

If this view is correct, then Northern Ashanti, hitherto untouched by the anthropologist and hardly opened up to the European, should be the ideal ground upon which to study Akan customs and beliefs.

As it is not intended, however, in the present volume, to deal with the historical records of Ashanti, I must pass on to describe the ceremony under consideration.

Account of a Wednesday Adae, *witnessed at Tekiman in the Brong Country on the* 10*th May* 1921.

The Wednesday *Adae*, called, as we have seen, *Wukudae* or *Kupadakuo* in Ashanti proper, is, though also known by these names among the Brong, generally called by them *Muruwukuo*.

The Brong do not appear to celebrate any Sunday *Adae*. The day before their Wednesday *Adae* they call *Adapa*, as in Southern Ashanti.

The *Muruwukuo* falls upon the same Wednesday as a *Wukudae* falls in Ashanti proper—a particularly suggestive fact—and it falls once every forty-two days. I had often noticed this commonly recurrent cycle, or forty-two-day divisions of time. The Ashanti call this period *adaduanan*, lit. forty days.

One day I overheard one of my men saying that in olden times, when the King of Ashanti was in doubt as to any date for a festival, he always referred to the Brong, who were the keepers of the king's calendar, so to speak. This led me to ask about it, when I discovered that time was reckoned in periods of forty-two-day cycles, every day of which had a particular name, each day in this period coming round again forty-two days later.

The following are the names of each of these forty-two days. It will be noticed that they consist of the commonly used Ashanti names for each of the seven days of the week, with a prefix. This in each case drops back one day each week, becoming prefixed to the name of the day immediately before that day to which it applied the previous week.

I have not yet been able to discover just what these prefixes

Fig. 34. The spirits are left to eat and drink

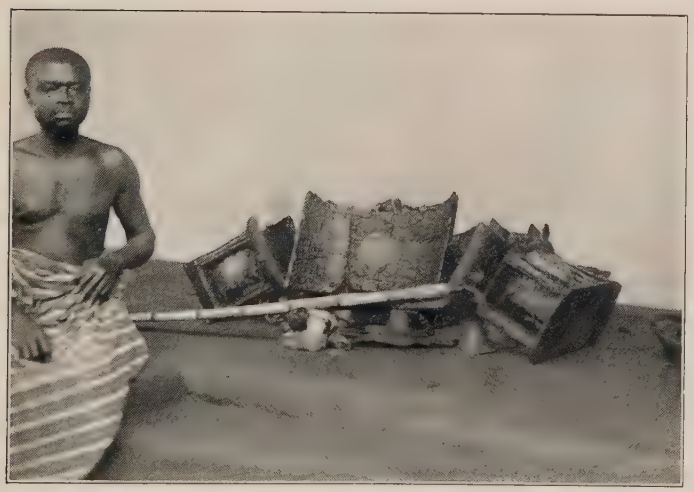


Fig. 35. The guardian of the blackened stools

mean, except in one case, the prefix *fo*, which may be translated ' festival ' or ' holy ' or ' lucky '.

Commencing our cycle with a *foda* (a holy day), say with a *fo*-Monday, and running through the whole cycle, we have (in each case the first syllable is the prefix, and the second the ordinary Ashanti name for that day of the week) :

1. *Fo-dwo* = *Fo*-Monday.
2. *Nwuna-bena* = *Nwuna*-Tuesday.
3. *Nkyi-wukuo* = *Nkyi*-Wednesday.
4. *Kuru-yao* = *Kuru*-Thursday.
5. *Kwa-fie* = *Kwa*-Friday.
6. *Mono-mene* = *Mono*-Saturday.
7. *Fo-kwesi* = *Fo*-Sunday.

(Each of the prefixes, it will be noted, now falls back one day.)

8. *Nwuna-dwo* = *Nwuna*-Monday.
9. *Nkyi-bena* = *Nkyi*-Tuesday.
10. *Kuru-wukuo* [1] = *Kuru*-Wednesday.
11. *Kwa-yao* = *Kwa*-Thursday.
12. *Mono-fie* = *Mono*-Friday.

(And again each prefix falls back one day, and the previous week's *mono*-Saturday now becomes,)

13. *Fo-mene* = *Fo*-Saturday.

The following Friday, the nineteenth day, will be *Fo-fie* ; the Thursday following that, the twenty-fifth day, *Fo-yao* ; the Wednesday following, the thirty-first day, *Fo-wukuo* ; the thirty-seventh day, *Fo-bena* ; and finally on the forty-third day, *Fo-dwo*, from which we started, will again have come round, and the whole cycle begin once more.

This supplies the explanation—in part at least—why the *Adae* and many other ceremonies, in connexion with birth, death, &c., are repeated in forty-day (really forty-two-day) cycles.

The ceremony witnessed on this occasion was, I was informed, an unusually quiet and inconspicuous affair, owing to the fact that almost all the able-bodied members of the community had gone to collect snails (*ko nwa*).[2]

[1] Sometimes also known as *Kurudapakuo*.

[2] These snails, of which there are several edible kinds, are spitted upon

On the *Adae* morning, the old head priest of the god Tano Kese and the elders left in the town went along to the *omanhene's* ' palace ' and saluted the chief, after which we all paid a visit to the Pantheon where the shrines[1] of Ta Kese and other gods—to be enumerated later—were kept. We were preceded by the chief's ' white ' stool, with bells hanging from the ' ears ' (see Fig. 36).

The uncovered shrines of the gods were all ranged along the low ledge running round the sides of the room, with the shrine of Ta Kese—the head god—high above the others, on the altar. I shall describe in more detail the inside of this temple when describing the Ashanti gods in another chapter.

We all sat down inside this room. Including the *omanhene* and the chief priest, there were only some half-dozen persons present. No palm wine or any other offering was made. The chief said that if the people had not been away, wine would have been given, and the gods asked for life, health, children, food, good hunting for the hunters, and good profits for the traders. The remainder of the wine would have been drunk by those present, after which he, the *omanhene*, would have held a reception at which he would have danced.

On this occasion, after sitting before the uncovered shrines for a few minutes and conversing on general topics, we all left the temple.

About 5 p.m. the small drums called *borobi* (hung over the shoulder and beaten with two sticks) called us again to the chief's ' palace '. Again only a few persons were present, the *Gyase* chief, the two old ' linguists ', the *omanhene*, myself, and several of my companions, who had accompanied me from Southern Ashanti.

A small low door on the right-hand side of the chief's compound was opened, and disclosed a very small room upon the

wooden skewers, about three feet in length, and tied up in bundles of twenty skewers called *nwakyem* when they are worth from 20*s*. to 30*s*. a bundle. They are smoked on racks over a fire.

[1] I shall use the word ' shrine ' throughout this volume to designate those receptacles, generally a brass pan with its contents of herbs, &c., which may become the habitat or is at any rate looked upon as the potential abode, of a divine (not a human) spirit. In all such cases the word hitherto used by the native interpreter and the European is ' fetish ', a word which I shall use in one sense alone. See Chap. IV.

Fig. 36. Preceded by the chief's 'white' stool

floor of which, but resting upon a long board, were seven blackened stools. In front of each stool had already been set a little pile of boiled yams, plantains, and ground nuts, and upon a very small low table was an old metal teapot, containing water, and two dishes covered over with plates, which I was told contained 'food'.

The *Gyase* chief now held a calabash of palm wine, and one of the 'linguists' held an empty calabash at the foot of each stool, while wine was poured into it by the *Gyase* chief, who said the following words:

'*Tekyia Kwame nne Muruwukuo wo nana Yao Kramo nsa mu nsa ni, wagye anom, ma wagyina n'akyiri akyigyina pa, osere wo kyere, osere wo akwahosan, kuro yi nkwaso, mma ne marima nkwaso.*'

'Tekyia Kwame (one of the dead Kings of Tekiman), to-day is *Muruwukuo* (Wednesday *Adae*), here is wine from the hand of Yao Kramo (the chief of Tekiman), may you accept it and drink, and may you stand behind him with a good standing. He begs you for a long reign, he begs you for long-continued health, life for this town, life for the women and men.'

Upon reaching the seventh and last stool the calabash was replenished and the wine again poured into the second calabash, with the words:

Ta Kora wo die ni o.
Ta Mensa wo die ni o.
Obo Kyerewa wo die ni o.
Ati Akosua wo die ni o.

'Ta Kora (the great god of the Ashanti),[1] this is yours. Ta Mensa (another name for the god Ta Kese), this is yours. Obo Kyerewa, this is yours. Ati Akosua, this is yours.

We now all went out again into the court-yard and joined the chief. It will have been noted that he took no part in the ceremony in the stool-house, and did not even come inside. We all sat down, and the wine, that had been poured into the large calabash and offered to the ancestral spirits and to the gods, was passed round, the two linguists drinking first (see Fig. 37).

After sitting for a little, and after some general conversation,

[1] An account of this god is given in Chaps. XV—XVIII.

we all set out for the Ta Kese temple, preceded by the chief's stool-carrier carrying his ' white ' stool.

Here the old head priest awaited us and led us into the room where the shrines of the gods reposed.

Since morning the raised altar upon which the chief god's (Ta Kese's) shrine rested, had been draped over with a white cloth which completely covered the two shrines of the gods next in order, Ta Kobina and Ati Akosua.

The brass basin, or shrine, of Ta Kese was uncovered but tied round with a coloured silk handkerchief. Upon the smooth top of the ingredients which formed the contents of the pan were reposing five eggs. Against the raised altar itself were resting three elephant tails, one *afona* (state sword), and the two rods of the ' linguists ', which they placed there as soon as they entered the Pantheon (see Fig. 38).

The walls of the room, like the altar, were draped with white *kente* cloth and Manchester brocades. All the shrines of the lesser and lower-graded gods stood uncovered on the low ledge running round the room. Several blackened stools—of departed priests—were at the end of the room opposite the altar. As each person entered he said to the priest :

' *Obosomfo maha 'o.*' ' Man of god, greetings.'

The *omanhene* now handed a pot of wine to his linguist, who in turn handed it to the priest with the words :

' *Nne Muruwukuo, nana Yao Kramo se ne nsam nsa a ore be fwe Tano anim ni.*'

' To-day is *Muruwukuo*, Grandfather Yao Kramo (the chief) says that here is wine from his hand which (he gives) that he may look upon the face of Tano.'

The wine was then poured from the pot into a calabash, and the priest filling his mouth with it sprayed it against the wall, saying :

' *Abanmu Ta Kese Birimpon, nne Muruwukuo, wo nana Yao Kramo se ne'nsa mu nsa ni, osere wo nkwa, osere wo ahooden, osere wo amanno, osere wo akwahosan ; kuro yi nye yiye, mmawofo nwo mma, mmarima nwo mma ; ye pe sika, yenya bi ; wo mma a beko hahane mu be ko fa nwa benya bi benfa mera, ma ye nya bi nni yenya bi nton nto ntama nfura.*'

' Ta Kese Birimpon (whose temple stands in the quarter of

FIG. 37. The two 'linguists' drinking wine after the ceremony in the stool house

FIG. 38. The altar and shrine of Ta Kese

the town known as) Aban, to-day is *Muruwukuo*, your grandchild Yao Kramo says here is wine from his hand; he begs you for life, he begs you for strength, he begs you for love of his people, he begs you for continuing health; may this town prosper, may the bearers of children bear children, and the males beget children; when we seek for wealth let us get some; as for your children who have gone to the forest in order to get snails, grant that they get some to bring, grant that we get some to eat and some to sell that we may buy cloths to cover ourselves.'

In Fig. 38 may be seen a small hole at the foot of the altar, and into this the priest poured the wine.

Following this offering was one of wine, given by the 'linguist' as his own offering. This the priest again sprayed from his mouth, saying:

'*Ta Kese Birimpon, wo nana ne Kwesi Ntwi* (the 'linguist') *ode nne Muruwukuo na ne' nsam nsa ni, osere wo nkwa . . . ope sika a, onya bi; ne nkurofo nkwaso; mma no nya' Boroni amane; mma no mfom Yao Kramo; Oboroni yiko wuran a, onya 'sono nkum, ma ye nya bi nni.*'

'Ta Kese Birimpon (the god), your grandchild is Kwesi Ntwi; he says that to-day is *Muruwukuo* and that this is an offering of wine from his hands; he begs you for life, &c., &c.; when he seeks for money let him get some; life to the people of his village; do not let him get into trouble with the white man; do not permit him to offend (his chief) Yao Kramo; when this white man goes to the forest, permit that he kill an elephant that we may have something to eat.'

The wine was poured out at the foot of the altar, as before. What was left was handed round and all sipped a little. We remained seated for a few minutes and the conversation was general, but conducted in subdued voices. The death of the poor fellow, who had fallen upon his spear, which I shall mention later, was discussed. I was asked about my hunting and also why I was interested in their gods, and why I did not, like other white men, say they were bad and foolish things to be burned and cast away.

Shortly after we all dispersed. The food at the foot of the blackened stools would later, so I was informed, be given to the stool-carriers' children.

Thus ended what I was told was a particularly quiet *Adae*. It is of course just possible that, owing to the absence of certain persons, some of the formalities and rites may have been omitted or altered.

The interesting point to notice is the mingling of the propitiation of ancestral human spirits with the worship of non-human spirits—the gods.

This concludes the account of these *Adae* ceremonies, and I propose, in my next chapter, to deal with other aspects of ancestor propitiation, not connected with *Adae* rites.

X

RELIGION

The Sacred Grove at Santemanso.

Some miles from the town of B——, and a little to the left of the main motor road to Coomassie, stand a few square yards of clearing in the forest marking the site which the Ashanti perhaps hold to be the most hallowed spot in all their territory.

'Since you have been permitted to behold the place, you have seen all we have to show you,' I have had said to me time and again by old Ashanti men and women, meaning that nothing remained of such significance and sacredness.

At this spot, Ashanti myth declares, the first human beings, belonging to certain of their ruling clans, came forth from the ground,[1] and settling near by, increased and multiplied, learned to use fire and other arts, till eventually, compelled by increasing numbers, they scattered and became the clan or 'blood' from which the rulers of the united nation later chose their kings and queens.

Myths and traditions are strangely substantiated in some respects by visible proofs. In the vicinity of this spot is an area of dense primaeval forest. The keen observer will note there are no clearings and no cocoa-trees, and if the mounds through which every now and then the motor road cuts, are minutely examined, they will be found not to be ant-hills but 'kitchen middens' from which project fragments of ancient pottery in which I found many neolithic instruments. The

[1] In many parts of Ashanti is to be found a tradition that the forebears of certain clans came forth out of a hole in the ground. There is a spot near Nkoranza and another near Wenki in North Ashanti, where large funnel-shaped holes are pointed out as being the spot where a particular clan's ancestors came forth in the early dawn of the world. Holding, as I do, that the Ashanti are a people from the North and not the indigenous inhabitants of the country they now occupy, I believe that they have adopted these myths from an indigenous people whom they met in the forests of their adopted country. Bosman, writing more than two hundred years ago, says, 'Having asked who were their ancestors . . . others on the Gold coast would persuade us that the first men came out of holes and pits.'

forest around for miles is dotted with these mounds, and the whole of this area along the banks of the Asuben River must, at some remote period, have been the site of a great settlement, larger by far than any Ashanti towns or villages of the present day. No one is permitted to cultivate the soil or clear the forest at this place.

On the first occasion upon which I was privileged to visit the sacred grove I was guided to the spot by the *okyeame* (spokesman), the *osene* (herald),[1] a little hunchback, and Abena Firi, the dear old Queen Mother—the custodian and priestess of the sacred grove—and several other elders from the little village of Asubengya.

The first thing that struck me was the reverence and the awe exhibited by my companions. Sandals were removed and left behind on the path, shoulders were bared, my Ashanti clerk was asked to remove his boots, and I was politely asked to take off my helmet, which, as the forest afforded a dense shade, I was glad to be able to do.

We followed a path which crossed the European-made road and eventually came upon a little clearing, planted with *summe* (*Costus sp.*) shrubs and containing an ancient wild-fig tree, at the base of which were eight pots buried up to their rims in the soft leaf mould. The Queen Mother would tell me nothing on this occasion, as she said she must first consult the chief and elders at Asubengya.

I recollect thinking, as I retraced my steps from the spot, that possibly the sites of some of our own minsters and cathedrals were chosen in unconscious obedience to dim and ancient traditions connecting them with the long-forgotten worship of prehistoric times.

A week elapsed before I was again taken to the grove. The interval I spent living in a little mud hut, near the Queen Mother's village, talking to her and the old man Kobina Wusu in the evenings, and making friends with the old folks in the

[1] This little man and I had become great friends since one day, when on meeting him for the first time, I had greeted him in Ashanti with 'Good morning, O herald, who drinks first of the wine cup'. (I had hazarded a guess at his profession, as in olden times hunchbacks were usually heralds.) His amazement was delightful to behold and he became my staunch friend and advocate among his villagers. It is such trifling incidents that make things easy for the anthropologist.

village. During this time I was told the tradition of the grove and the reason of its sanctity.

Here in Oxford as I write, the tale may seem like some children's fairy story, but it was otherwise in the environment where I first heard it, and as it was told me by the old Queen Mother in the presence of the chief (the leader of the left wing of the Ashanti army), old Kobina Wusu, the little hunchback herald, and other grey-beards.

The names given here of the dead forbears of the clan were not given me with the rest of the story because the day that it was recounted was not a Monday or Tuesday, the only days upon which it was permissible to mention them. When later, on the day permitted for their recitation, I was told these sacred names, all present stood up and the men bared their shoulders and slipped their sandals from off their feet. (And yet, I have read somewhere that reverence is unknown among this people.)

Here, then, is the story of the grove in the Queen Mother's own words:

'Very long ago upon a certain Monday night [1] a worm bored its way up through the ground and was followed by seven men, several women, a leopard, and a dog.[2] The names of these men and women I cannot repeat save only on a Monday or a Tuesday.'

(These were later given me, and were as follows:

1. Adu Ogyinae.
2. Opoku Tenten.
3. Adu Kwao.
4. Agyapon Tenten.
5. Kusi Aduoku.
6. Ankora Dame.
7. Odehye (royal) Adjewa Sabene.

And of the women there were:

1. Takyuwa Brobe.
2. Aberewa (lit. old woman) Noko.
3. Aberewa Samante.
4. Aberewa Musu.
5. Abrade Kwa.)

[1] *Nkyidwo* was the word she used, which I took down at the time without knowing to what it referred. It will be seen that it is a particular day in the forty-two day cycle still kept up among the Ashanti (Brong) of the far north of Ashanti. See Chap. IX.

[2] Dogs, until quite recently, were not allowed to be kept at Asubengya.

'All these people, with one exception (Adu Ogyinae), were distracted by the new and strange sights that they saw around them, and their eyes roved wildly about in fear.

'Adu Ogyinae laid his hands upon them one by one and soothed them.

'By Wednesday they had begun to build huts, but while so engaged a tree fell upon Adu Ogyinae and killed him. That is the real origin for the great oath of Ashanti, the *wukuda* oath.[1]

'The dog went away and brought back fire in his mouth, food was laid upon the fire, and the dog was fed with this (as an experiment), and as it grew fat, men came to eat cooked food.

'The first of our ancestors settled at Nampansa, where the soil is very red (now the site of the kitchen middens mentioned above).

'The men and women who came from the ground were of the Aduana blood clan, with its six sub-divisions Atwae, Abrade, Ada, Amoakwade, Amanwere, and Nyampasakyi. The Owoko (Oyoko), the clan that was later to sit upon the stool of Coomassie, also came up from the ground at Santemanso.'

The Queen Mother then went on to tell how Odomankoma (the Creator) on his journey about the earth 'making things' met these people already settled here, a feature which recurs in the myths of other clans, so that apparently certain mortals are supposed to have been already upon earth when the Creator of things was walking about at his work.

She continued: 'The Creator (Odomankoma) took one of our ancestors with him as his "linguist", and we had his staff up to the reign of Kakari, when it was lost. The eight pots you saw in the forest are for the men and women of our clan who came up from the ground at that spot. The King of Ashanti always sent a cow, once every year, to be sacrificed at that spot, but he was never allowed to go there in person. Even when King Prempeh was being taken away by the English (1896), once he had crossed the Asuben river, he was bade to cover his head.'

[1] For a note on oaths see *Ashanti Proverbs*, pp. 129–31, where I have briefly sketched the idea underlying the swearing of an oath, as a means of removing a dispute from the sphere of possible private settlement, and securing a trial *in judicio*. I hope to go much more deeply into this subject in some future work.

Fig. 39. Setting out for the sacred grove

Fig. 40. The approach to the sacred grove

FIG. 41. Kobina Wusu

FIG. 42. The chief pouring out the wine into the pots

Hereupon the old man, Kobina Wusu, who had been following every word of this story, quoted an Ashanti proverb which ran: '*obi nfwe n'akyi kwan*' ('no one looks backwards down the path on which he has come').

That is briefly the myth connected with the grove.

How the Aduana and Owoko clans split up, the latter spreading north and founding Kokofu and Coomassie, eventually becoming the ruling clan, does not concern us here. I will pass on now to describe the rites witnessed at the grove on Monday the 12th December 1921. We all assembled at the few huts which formed the settlement (Asantemanso), where the Queen Mother lived. Here we met several other very old women, one of whom was carrying the brass vessel (*kuduo*) upon her head into which the pieces of the sacrifice were later to be placed (see Fig. 39). Some of these old women, I was told afterwards, were priestesses of a local god, Ta Kofi. We set off, following the narrow path leading from Santemanso to where it met the main motor road; crossing this we again picked up the path on the other side of the road.

Here our way was barred by a device which in olden times was as impassable as any physical barrier. Above the path, about six feet up, had been stretched a creeper, and upon this split sticks had been fixed, like a washerwoman's pegs, only longer (see Fig. 40). This is called in Ashanti *mma* (lit. do not pass), and was used as a warning that no person without authority must pass that way, the penalty formerly being death.[1]

When we reached this spot, the Queen Mother sent back about twenty of the people who had followed us from the village (mostly youths and boys). The remainder of us proceeded under the *mma*, and down the path, till we came to the clearing beneath the fig tree, where the eight little pots stood. The Queen Mother and the women wheeled to the left of the tree, the *omanhene* (chief), Kobina Wusu (see Fig. 41), and the rest of us turned to the right, and sat down opposite to each other and a few yards apart, with the little cluster of pots between. Two sheep that had been brought with us were tied to the trees behind—one of these may be seen in the

[1] This sign was also used, I was informed, to shut off the quarters of the women in the King of Ashanti's 'palace'.

photograph (Fig. 43). The glade was so dark that it was not possible to secure any good instantaneous photographs, but those I took are reproduced here because of their particular interest.

Lying beside the pots was a small moss-covered stone which the chief, upon my inquiring about it, told me was called *nokwabo*, lit. the truthful stone. It had, he said, been brought from Coomassie and presented by King Osai Bonsu, the elder, just before he went on his expedition against Gyaman (*c.* 1800), together with a slave.

One of the very old women with the Queen Mother now came forward and took up a position just beside the pots, whereupon we all stood up. The Queen Mother scooped out a small hole in the ground, close to the eight pots. Amma Amoako then repeated the names of the ancestors, males and females (whose names have been already given), suffixing to each the word *kwa*.[1] As each name was said the Queen Mother repeated it. I was later informed that in the old days it was considered a capital offence to make a mistake in the order in which these names were repeated, or to repeat them at all upon any day other than a Monday or a Tuesday, or to recite them wantonly, i. e. except upon a ' ceremonial occasion ' or with the ' permission of the chief and elders '.

After the joint recitation of the names, the ceremony commenced. I had had no information as to what was going to be done, and the rites now to be performed came as a complete surprise. The Queen Mother of Asantemanso had very lately been married—for the third time—I was told. It was the custom that any one who should marry her should make a sacrifice to the spirit ancestors (and just possibly some other non-human spirit, though this point is not yet clear to me) in the grove. The offering, as will be noted in the speech made to the spirits, is called *ayedie*. Now this is the word used for the presents that a bridegroom brings to the parents or other person who has the right of giving a girl in marriage, and its use in this context is very significant.

The chief now rose up. He bared his shoulder, and standing

[1] Cf. the *Drum History of Mampon*, p. 416, foot-note, where this word is used in connexion with the names of kings, in the nature it would appear of a title.

with his feet out of, but upon, his sandals, took a glass of rum, and first allowing the little hunchback herald to sip a little, leaned over the pots and spoke as follows while one of the two sheep was held across the shoulders of a man who stood beside him as he spoke (see Fig. 42) :

' *Santeman Kobina nsa ni o, w'adworaoma nne Dwo : wo 'yere ne Ofiri, na Pensan afa no aware, na wanfa w'ayedie amere wo nti, na wo ma ye mienu so na fom tim'. Nne Pensan de oguan, ode nsa ne ntama de abere wo, ye mienu nkwaso, me Agyeman nkwa so, mma m'aso nsi, mma m'ani nfura, mma me kote nwu, Asanteman nkwaso, Aban nkwaso, Oboroni nkwaso. Ma Pensan ne ne 'yere nwo mma. Yen a ye wo ha nyina nkwa so. Mo be gye 'guane yi adi ne nsa yi anom.*'

' Santeman Kobina, here is wine, by your kindness to-day is Monday ; your wife is Ofiri, and Pensan (the bridegroom) has taken her in marriage, but because he did not bring the marriage gifts to you, you caused them both to fall sick. To-day Pensan has brought a sheep, and wine and cloth for you : let them both have life ; life for me, Agyeman, do not let my ears become closed, do not let my eyes become covered over, do not let my penis die. Life to the Ashanti nation, life to the Castle (the Government), life to the white man ; permit Pensan and his wife to bear children ; life to all of us here present. Receive this sheep and eat, and this wine and drink ' (see Fig. 42).

The drums which had accompanied us, here spoke, but what they said I could not make out (possibly to tell people that the spirits were drinking,). The chief poured some of the wine from the glass, first into the little hole that the Queen Mother had dug, next upon ' the truthful stone ', and last of all upon the ground, this last for Bohyemo, the leopard, ' the son of Santeman ', as I was later informed.

The first sheep was now brought forward, held very firmly by several men by the legs and the muzzle—to prevent it crying out—when the chief pressed a small pointed knife into its throat, saying as he did so the following words :

' *Santeman Kobina, gye 'guan di. Ohema ne ne 'kunu nkwa so, ye ye biribiara a enye yiye. Mma Pensan nka se " Me be ye den ? " Mma Ohema nka se, " Me ko ye den ? "* '

' Santeman Kobina, receive (this) sheep and eat ; life to the

Queen Mother and her husband; whatever they do may it be well. May Pensan (never) have to say "what *shall* I do?" May the Queen Mother (never) have to say "what must I do?"'

The blood was allowed to drip into each of the little pots in turn, then over the 'truthful' stone, and finally into the hole. One of the men present, Dansu by name, cut the sheep's throat, the blood being collected in a brass basin. The carcase was placed on some leaves that had been collected, and laid upon the ground near the stools where the chief and I had been sitting. The sheep was cut up amid a perfect pandemonium, every one trying to make conversation all the time and to talk at the top of his voice, no one paying the least attention to what any one else said. I asked the chief why such a noise was permitted, and his reply was that they were not making enough, and that I should just hear the noise when a cow is being cut up. From this answer and their conduct, I am inclined to believe that the noise was an intentional part of the rite. It certainly seemed to throw in sharp contrast the hushed voices and absolute stillness of all while other parts of the ceremony were in progress.

Many of the young 'royals', i.e. sons of the royal blood, kept snatching away little pieces of the meat as it was cut up, and were playfully switched with twigs by the elders; but they became such a nuisance that eventually the whole carcase was moved right up beside the pots, where none of the youngsters dared go, and here the cutting up of the meat was continued in peace, if not in quietness. Small pieces of the meat were given to the Queen Mother who placed them in the *kuduo* (little brass vessel). Using a brass spoon, she then transferred the pieces, a spoonful at a time, from the *kuduo* to each of the eight pots in turn, and she also placed a spoonful in the hole and upon the stone. One spoonful was handed over for the chief, and this he would take home, have cooked, and eat. The head of the sheep was laid beside the pots, the remainder of the meat being divided. A piece of calico (twelve yards) was now produced. Pieces were torn off this and fastened round the fig tree and several other trees and creepers growing near this spot (see Fig. 43), the remainder of the cloth being shared between the Queen Mother and the men who had fastened the strips upon the trees. The chief here—in answer to my question—said that

FIG. 43. The trees at the sacred grove being dressed in white calico

FIG. 44. At the ceremony

the fig tree was a famous sanctuary, and that any one sentenced to death who escaped there would be safe. I subsequently made fuller inquiries about this matter, and the subject will be referred to again later. All present now returned thanks to Pensan (the Queen Mother's husband), and this completed the ceremony.

A second ceremony immediately followed. The chief again standing over the pots, and holding a glass containing spirits, spoke as follows:

'*Santeman Kobina gye nsa nom: oguan 'so nni, nne Dwo na eye wo da a wo de didi, me fua oguane ne nsa na me de re ma wo, Oboroni nkwa so: Aban nkwa so, nne Aban na ye som no, mma bone biara mma Santeman yi mu, mma obiara mmo ne tirim po mma otuo nto da, mma me kote nwu, mma m'aso nsi, mma m'ani nfura, obawofo nwo ba. Asum'gyaman nkwa so, Santeman nyina nkwa so, Santeman nye yiye ma Aban.*'

'Santeman Kobina, receive wine and drink, here is also a sheep; to-day is Monday, and that is the day on which you eat; I hold this sheep and wine and give to you; life to the white man, life to the "Castle" (Government); to-day it is the "Castle" whom we serve; permit no bad thing whatever to come upon this people of Santeman. Let no one tie a knot in his head (i. e. plot) that the guns should ever go off. Do not let my penis die, do not let my ears become stopped up, do not permit my eyes to become covered over; let the bearers of children bear children. Life to the people of Asum'gye (Asubengya). Life to all the Ashanti nation, and may the Ashanti people work for the good of (lit. do good to) the Castle (the Government).'

He then poured some of the spirit into the hole in the ground, some upon the stone, and changing the glass over from his right to his left hand, he poured some upon the ground, saying:

'*Bohemo etwi a oto abenkum, ye re ma wo 'se biribi adi, na wo na wo bo Asanteman ho ahata, wo die ni.*'

'Bohemo, the leopard, who springs to the left,[1] we are giving your father something to eat, and you who shake the foliage around the Ashanti nation, here is yours.'

The second sheep, which was being supported upon the neck

[1] All Ashanti hunters will tell you that the leopard always springs from the left. The leopard in many parts of Ashanti is, if killed, accorded a funeral.

of one of the men—a stool-carrier I was told—while this was being said, was now brought forward and its throat pricked, blood being allowed to drip upon the stone, into the hole, and into the pots as before. The sheep was killed, cut up, and small pieces again placed inside the *kuduo* (the small brass pot). These fragments, I was afterwards told, consisted of three pieces each of the breast, liver, lungs, kidneys, intestines, stomach, hindleg, foreleg, neck, and root of the tail. The Queen Mother now lifted the pieces out of the *kuduo* with her brass spoon and placed some in each pot, on the stone, and in the small hole she had scraped out. A small piece of the breast of the sacrifice was now dipped into the hole by the Queen Mother, taken out again, and handed to the herald to carry home for the chief. It was put into the hole to get ' the spirit ', I was informed.

The remainder of the sacrifice was divided up as follows :

(*a*) The Queen Mother, foreleg, head, and skin.

(*b*) Chief and elders, hindlegs, the other foreleg.

(*c*) The ' linguist ' (spokesman), the testicles.

The small pieces remaining in the *kuduo* the Queen Mother and her household took home to eat. The offerings in the little pots had, I was informed, disappeared by the following day. The white cloths were left upon the trees. There was a certain spot near the grove for throwing away the contents of the intestines of the sacrifice ; the old woman, who had carried the *kuduo* from the village, showed the men where this was. On her return she demanded a piece of meat, and the photograph (Fig. 44) shows her in the act of passing a knife to some one who is to cut her a slice.

The above completed the ceremonies at the grove.

The *omanhene* and Queen Mother later gave me the following further information about the fig tree and the taboos observed in connexion with this sacred spot. If any person were sentenced to death for a crime or about to be killed at a funeral custom and managed to run away and catch hold of the fig tree, the life of such a person would, as a general rule, be spared, the person becoming a servant of the grove. Should the King of Ashanti, however, insist that such a one should be returned to him for punishment, then ' something would happen to the king before the year was over '. In other cases, before the person

who had reached the sanctuary was handed over to his master, the latter had to swear the great oath that his life would be spared.

There were, however, certain capital offences the penalty for which could not be avoided by fleeing to the grove. These were :

(*a*) Committing adultery with any wife of the King of Coomassie, Kokofu, Juaben, or with any woman of the Blood (the Owoko blood).

(*b*) Murder.

(*c*) Cursing the king or, worse, his ancestors ; this terrible offence is euphemistically known as *hyira ohene*, lit. blessing the king, to avoid even using the expression for to curse.

(*d*) Invoking the power of a god or superhuman spirit to kill the king, known as *bo 'hene dua*, lit. ' to club the king with a stick '. In all such cases, however, before this culprit could be handed back for punishment, the King of Ashanti would send a cow, a *soa* weight of gold dust (6*s*.), a white cloth, rum, fowls, eggs, and rice to the chief of Asubengya. These gifts were taken to the sacred grove and the chief would address the seven forbears of the seven clans, saying :

' The offence that so and so has committed is one forbidden by your law. The Ashanti king has brought you these gifts that the culprit may be returned to him for punishment. The Ashanti King has done you no wrong, only this culprit, therefore let no harm come upon the Ashanti King, as you know the laws that you yourself made demand death as the penalty of the crime.' The rum is then poured upon the fig tree which is draped with white cloth. The cow is killed and portions put into the little pots.

This sanctuary is still in use to-day, in a minor sort of way, and is sought by people seeking redress for the mitigation of the sentences of a chief's tribunal.

Taboos of the Grove

To spill human blood is absolutely taboo at Santemanso. Moreover, every woman in the little village where the Queen Mother and custodian of the grove reside, as soon as the menstrual period is about to begin, must leave the village and

go and live for a week at Asubengya or some other neighbouring village. Neither is any one allowed to die here; when any one becomes very ill, he or she is removed from the village.

I cannot be quite certain about the Santeman Kobina, who is invoked during the ceremonies I have described. He is not a human spirit, i. e. not one of the ancestral spirits. All were emphatic upon that point. My clerk, who was an educated Ashanti, informed me it was ' the spirit of nature ', and perhaps he was near the mark, for the old Queen Mother said it was the soul of the leaves and the trees and of the earth at that spot. At Santemanso no cultivation, i. e. breaking of the soil, is permitted on a Tuesday (Kobina means that the day of observance of this spirit is Tuesday).

Fig. 45. . . . led by his sandal bearers . . .

Fig. 46. A sheep was now carried forward to where the men were mixing the earth and water

XI

RELIGION

A Ceremony witnessed while the Burial Quarters of the Kings and Queens of M—— were undergoing Repairs.

The *Barim dan* or burial rooms of those of the royal blood at the town of M—— having fallen into disrepair, steps were taken to have the building overhauled. In olden times, I was informed, it would have been necessary that the whole work of repairs should be completed between sunrise and sunset of one day, and that with this end in view all the materials required would be collected and in readiness. In this instance this had not been done, but the work of plastering the floors and walls was completed in a single day. The *Barim dan*, outside and inside, looked just like an ordinary Ashanti house. I had passed and repassed it for years without any knowledge as to its significance. Inside, the courtyard was surrounded upon all four sides by small rooms with only three walls, the fourth side being open to the yard. These rooms were perfectly bare of furniture or other utensils, and under the floor of each, I was told, was buried a former ruler of the clan.

The morning the ceremony took place was opened by drumming upon the *ntumpane* or talking drums the history, names, and attributes of the dead kings and queens of this particular clan. Every one was in mourning, that is, wearing the russet brown *kuntonkuni*, dyed cloths, and all had fasted. The chief left his ' palace ' headed by a long cavalcade of court officials, carrying state chairs and led by his sandal-bearers and young treasurer carrying an enormous bunch of iron keys upon his head (see Fig. 45). The *omanhene* was closely followed by the *kwadwumfo* (minstrels), who sang to him the names of his ancestors. The whole townspeople seemed to have collected and to be working like droves of ants, and carrying water and red earth into the courtyard, whilst others inside were mixing the ' swish ' (water and earth). These people

I was told, were 'royals', i. e. those of the ruling clan and also children of the chief. The old Queen Mother was busy assisting them. A sheep was now carried forward to where the men were mixing the earth and water. The *omanhene* pricked its throat and the blood was allowed to mingle with the clay. The sheep was then carried round into every one of the small rooms, and a little blood allowed to fall upon the floor of each. Gold dust was next sprinkled over the 'swish' by the chief and Queen Mother, who took it from a little paper packet they carried. The Queen Mother, as may be seen in Fig. 46, carried a *kuduo* (brass vessel) upon her head, and this, I was told, contained water. I did not, however, see her use it. The room and yard were now so densely packed with people that, once having taken up a position, it was almost impossible to move about, and I could only observe what was going on in my immediate vicinity. It was impossible also to hear what was said amid the babel of voices, mingled with the noise made by the drummers and horn-blowers assembled inside the yard.

Dozens of people (men) now set to work to plaster and beat down the red clay (mixed with the blood, water, and gold dust) upon the floor of each room. While this was being done, the *omanhene* was smearing the foreheads of every one with the same mixture with which the floors were being plastered. This he did in the following manner: Smearing the fingers of his left hand with the red earth, and supporting the head and neck of the subject with his right forearm, he held the three fingers of his left hand against that person's forehead, who drew his head along the extended fingers and was marked with three parallel lines thus ≡ (see Fig. 47). A second sheep was now brought in and killed in the same way as the first. I do not know if any of the meat was eaten. I have reason to believe not, at least by adults. I was informed, and believe it to be correct, that in olden times human victims would have been sacrificed on this occasion—always with the clearly defined idea that the ghosts of such would go to attend the ghosts of these dead rulers, and not merely for the sake of wanton cruelty or blood lust.

The chief and Queen Mother now seated themselves in one of the rooms and rum was served out to all (see Fig. 48). Later the *omanhene* and his followers came out into the street and he

Fig. 47. The chief smearing the red clay upon his subjects

Fig. 48. Rum was served out

Fig. 49. He danced in person, holding a rifle in his hand

danced in person, holding a rifle in his hand, and receiving the encores of his court, which were signified by holding up the hands with the first and second and third fingers extended (see Fig. 49). Every one fasted throughout the whole day, and as a considerable quantity of liquor was consumed the effect of this showed on a number of people. Much of the intoxication noticed by Europeans on such occasions, and still more at funerals, is due to the fact that those participating have been fasting for long periods, so that even a little liquor soon goes to the head. Moreover, indulgence on such occasions only takes place after the solemn rites have been performed and after all the serious business of the day is over. The first part of these ceremonies is never seen by Europeans; these are performed in private and only a select body is admitted. The second and public ceremony any one passing may see. It is in the nature of a relaxation from the seriousness of what preceded it. The public, including Europeans, see only this side and are apt to look upon them as debaucheries. No people in the world is more cognizant of the evils of alcoholic excess than the Ashanti. In olden days, when a chief or king was sitting in council and hearing the suits of his subjects, should any envoy from another court arrive, and the wine cup be passed round to the guests, and partaken of by the councillors and judges, the court would be adjourned lest the wine should have caused the heads of the tribunal to be heated or less clear. Those who were present in Coomassie during the recent trial, before their own chiefs, of the miscreants who desecrated the 'Golden Stool', will never forget the sobriety and the dignity with which that case was conducted (see Figs, 103–5).

XII

RELIGION

The Baya *Ceremony, witnessed at Nsoko in Northern Ashanti on the 29th May* 1922.

I WAS lying very ill in the little rest house at Nsoko in the Brong country of Northern Ashanti when the chief sent his ' linguist ' to me to say that they were about to hold a ceremony of thanksgiving called *Baya*, at which offerings would be made to the *samanfo* (spirits of dead ancestors) for the rice crop of the previous season and a blessing asked for the next season's crop. I was informed later that a similar custom takes place annually at Abora on the littoral near Cape Coast,[1] and at Mampon in Central Ashanti is also held a rite called *Ye re to emo* (we are giving rice); so the custom is very widely observed. As I was feeling so ill at this time, I think it quite possible that I did not see everything that took place on this occasion, and that this account is therefore incomplete. For my present purpose, however, what is here recorded is sufficient to show that ancestral spirits are solicited to use their power in the interests of agriculture.

Inside the yards of both the chief's and the Queen Mother's compounds was one of the usual rooms with three walls only. On the slightly raised floor of each room was a platform (called *ase*) raised a few inches above the floor-level upon which were placed eating and drinking vessels for the *samanfo* (dead ancestors). At the chief's place, these consisted of thirteen little black pots and six broken bottles. I sat down beside the chief in the compartment opposite. An old woman and an old man, *barimfo* (attendants at the burial-places of the dead rulers), I was told, came in through the door leading into the compound carrying plates of rice, ground-nut soup, and water. These were portioned out among the pots and the water poured into the bottles, the old woman saying (see Fig. 50):

[1] It should be noted that Brong tradition has it that long ago some of their ancestors migrated from this region to the coast.

'*Nne Fodwo nananom samanfo mo me di mmo ye hyira o afrehyia pa.*'

'To-day is sacred Monday; spirits of our grandsires come and eat rice, we invoke blessing for a good year.'

The rice remaining over was eaten, I was told, by children. The chief appeared to take no part in the ceremony.

I was carried straight from here to the house of the Queen Mother, where was a somewhat similar row of pots and bottles with the offerings already upon them. She and the other women in her compound had smeared their breasts, shoulders, and arms with white clay (see Fig. 51). I was told that a similar ceremony would be performed in every house in the village, but I did not verify this.

The ceremonies described in this and the preceding pages are only examples of outstanding occasions upon which the aid of ancestral spirits is invoked. One catches glimpses here and there, in everyday life and in almost every action of the social round, which show how near the living are to the dead and how constantly the dead are in the thoughts of the living.

The older Ashanti men and women never partake of food or drink without putting a morsel of the one and a few drops of the other in the ground for the *samanfo.*

When an Ashanti or one of his clansmen recovers from an illness he will say, *Me da samanfo ase,* 'I thank the spirits'.

In the ordinary business transactions they are in his mind. No transfer of land is valid or at least complete without the rum and wine, a demand which many a European has looked upon as a further proof of the insobriety of this people, but which is really to propitiate the spirit owners of the land.[1]

At the installation of a new chief, sacrifices are made to the spirits.

At the marriage of one of the royal blood, wine is poured upon the ancestral stools, with the words:

'*Gye nsa nnom, wo nana Asumasi wa ware, ne 'kunu abetu ne tiri nsa* (or *abagwadie,* as the case may be), *wo die ni, ne'nkwaso, aware a ore ko nye yiye owo mma, yenkye.*'

[1] See Chap. XXI, Land Tenure and Alienation.

'Receive this wine; your grandchild So-and-so has married; her husband had given his head wine (or marriage gifts). This is yours. Long life to them and may the union prosper, and when they bear children may they remain (upon earth).'

A priest will sometimes say to one whom he, the priest, has reason to believe is going to die, *Samanfo ye fwe fwe wo*, 'The spirits of your ancestors are seeking for you.'

When the late *omanhene* (paramount chief) of B—— was ill, a priest consulted by the family as to the cause is reported to have said that the spirits of the sick man's ancestors were annoyed because he, the *omanhene*, had been heard to say that he had done more for 'the stool' than they had ever done. In consequence, said the priest, the spirits were calling upon him to account for his words.

I have a note in my diary under the 5th September 1921 which is as follows:

'. . . to-day, when one of the wives of the chief called E. A—— died, a priest told me that she was always calling upon the name of her late husband, so he had at last sent for her to come to him.'

I was informed that a fire of *issa* logs was always kept alight in the palace of the King of Ashanti in the old days, and that this was for the *samanfo*.

Incest (using the term in the sense in which it is understood in Ashanti) was formerly punished by death, but may now be condoned by the blood of a sacrifice being poured upon the ancestral stools.

Fig. 50. To-day is *Fodwo* . . . spirits of our ancestors come and eat rice

Fig. 51. The Queen Mother of Nsoko

XIII

RELIGION

'Nyame, the Supreme Being.

I HAD some years ago, taken a firm stand against a school of thought—the Ellis school—which denied that the conception of a Supreme Being in the West African mind, and His place in their religion, were due to any cause deeper or more remote than the influence of Christian missionary teachings.

The late Sir A. B. Ellis, our great authority upon this region, in his *Twi-Speaking Peoples of the Gold Coast of West Africa*, writes as follows:

'Within the last twenty or thirty years the German missionaries, sent out from time to time by the mission societies of Basel and Bremen, have made Nyankopon known to European ethnologists and students of the science of religion, but being unaware of the real origin of this god, have generally written and spoken of him as a conception of the native mind, whereas he is really a god borrowed from Europeans and only thinly disguised. . . . To the negro of the Gold Coast, Nyankopon is a material and tangible being, possessing legs, body, arms, in fact all the limits and the senses and the faculties of man. . . .

'For this reason no sacrifice was offered to him. . . . There were no priests for Nyankopon . . . consequently no form of worship for Nyankopon is established.'

I quoted the above extract in a previous work, and therein stated at some length that I wholly disagreed with the opinion and statements of Ellis upon this particular subject.[1]

Further research, embodying a much fuller investigation into Ashanti religious beliefs than was before possible, has only served to strengthen the opinion which I formerly expressed.

It is surprising to find that Ellis, who, considering his many difficulties in working with an interpreter, made such good use, on the whole, of his opportunities, was so greatly misled with regard to such an important question. He was, moreover,

[1] See *Ashanti Proverbs*, pp. 17–23.

a close student of Bosman, whom he constantly quotes, but he appears to have missed or ignored what the Dutchman wrote upon this subject more than 150 years before those 'German missionaries' ever set foot upon the Coast.

Bosman says:

'It is really the more to be lamented that the negroes idolize such worthless Nothings by reason that several amongst them have no very unjust idea of the Deity, for they ascribe to God the attributes of Omnipresence, Omniscience, and Invisibility, besides which they believe that he governs all things by Providence. By reason God is invisible, they say it would be absurd to make any Corporeal Representation of Him . . . wherefore they have such multitudes of Images of their Idol gods which they take to be subordinate Deities to the Supreme God . . . and only believe these are mediators betwixt God and men, which they take to be their Idols.'

How accurate in some respects Bosman's statement is will be clear from an examination of the religious ceremonies which are here recorded.

I have already stated that I am convinced that the conception, in the Ashanti mind, of a Supreme Being has nothing whatever to do with missionary influence, nor is it to be ascribed to contact with Christians or even, I believe, with Mohammedans. Surely those who find it incongruous that the West African 'Negro', who seems so backward in most things, should have so far progressed in religious development, forget that the magnificent conception of a one Supreme Deity was not the prerogative of minds which we commonly consider the greatest of old—those of the Greeks and the Romans, but was a conception of primitive people who lived after the Pyramids were built but before the advent of Greece and Rome—the Bedouins of the desert.

I believe that such a thought, so far from postulating an advanced stage in culture and what we term civilization, may well be the product of the mind of a primitive people who live face to face with nature, perhaps unclothed, sleeping under the stars, seeing great rivers dry up and yet again become rushing torrents, seeing the lightning from the heavens rending great trees and killing men and beasts, depending upon the rains for their own lives and those of their herds, observing that the

very trees and herbs and grass can only live if they are watered from the skies.

I can see no reason, therefore, why the idea of a one great God, Who is the Firmament, upon Whom ultimately all life depends, should not have been the conception of a people living under the conditions of the Ashanti of old, and I can see no just cause for attributing what we have come to regard as one of the noblest conceptions of man's mind, to dwellers in, and builders of, cities, and to writers and readers of parchments and books.

In a sense, therefore, it is true that this great Supreme Being, the conception of whom has been innate in the minds of the Ashanti, is the Jehovah of the Israelites. It was He who of old left His own dwelling above the vaulted sky, and entered the tent of dyed skins where was His earthly abode and His shrine, when He came down to protect the Children of Israel in their march to the Promised Land.

Again, there is nothing really incongruous or new in finding a belief in a Supreme Being side by side with ' multitudes of their Idol gods '.[1]

As will be seen presently, every Ashanti temple is a pantheon in which repose the shrines of the gods, but the power or spirit, that on occasions enters into these shrines, is directly or indirectly derived from the one God of the Sky, whose intermediaries they are. Hence we have in Ashanti exactly that ' mixed religion ' which we find among the Israelites of old. They worshipped Jehovah, but they worshipped other gods as well. It was only later, after the reign of Solomon, when the Jews became a civilized people and a literary class arose, that Jehovah assumed a purer form and was recognized as the one and only God. The whole subject is one of absorbing interest ; as the design of this volume is not, however, to dogmatize or theorize, but merely to state facts, I must pass on to these.

From the very fact that 'Nyame, the Sky God, is considered too remote to be concerned very directly in person with the affairs of man, and has delegated His powers to His lieutenants, the *abosom*, or lesser gods, it would perhaps be natural to expect that His worship, sacrifice, priesthood, and temples

[1] Bosman.

should be lacking, which is the view taken by Ellis in the extract just quoted. But it is hardly an exaggeration to say that every compound in Ashanti contains an altar to the Sky God, in the shape of a forked branch cut from a certain tree (Fig. 52) which the Ashanti call '*Nyame dua*, lit. God's tree.[1] Between the branches, which are cut short, is placed a basin, or perhaps a pot, and in this receptacle is generally to be found (besides the offering) a neolithic celt ('*Nyame akuma*, God's axe).

These altars to the Sky God, together with the figure of the man making the offering, are one of the constantly recurring designs on ancient Ashanti weights (see Fig. 126, no. 10). Beside these rude altars, are to be found, hidden away in remote corners of the older palaces, beautifully designed temples to the Sky God. One such is shown in the frontispiece of this volume, with an altar and one of the priests beside it.

Moreover, Ashanti proverbs abound in references and allusions to the Supreme Being. Here are a few chosen at random :

Asase terew, na Onyame ne panyin.

Of all the wide earth, the Supreme Being is the elder.

Wope aka asem akyere Onyankopon a, ka kyere mframa.

If you wish to tell anything to the Supreme Being, tell it to the winds.

Me a meda anyannya menhu Onyankopon na wo a wubutuw ho.

I who am lying sprawling on my back do not see the Supreme Being, how do you expect to who are sprawling there on your belly ?

(This proverb is the *motif* of the Ashanti weight shown in Fig. 126, no. 2.)

Onyame ma wo yare a, oma wo aduru.

If God gave you sickness he also gave you medicine.

There are many more which space forbids me to quote, but they may be found in my *Ashanti Proverbs*. The drum language and the set pieces known to every drummer in Ashanti are full of allusions to the Supreme Being.

These constant references, in their proverbs, in this ancient

[1] The botanical name of which is *Alstonia Congensis*.

FIG. 52. *'Nyame dua*, altar to the Sky God

and now almost forgotten art of metal-casting, in the records of their drum language, and in ancient architecture, are proof, if further proof were necessary, that here is no new idea and no new and adopted exotic thought.

It will be seen later, when the shrines of the gods come to be described, that the dominant power in these is nearly always derived from some object taken from water, and that certain waters themselves are looked upon as holy.

The genealogical trees of the most famous gods, which are rivers or lakes, as will be seen later, show them as ' sons of the Supreme Being ', i. e. children of the Sky.

The gold and silver ornaments, in the form of crescent moons,

worn round the young priests' necks, have embossed upon them the sun, the moon, and the stars.

The priest seen in Fig. 52 was one of four, who are known respectively as :

1. *'Nyame boa me.* (God help me.)
2. *Fa ma 'Nyame.* (Take it and give to God.)
3. *'Nyame asem.* (God's word.)
4. *'Nyame adom.* (God's favour.)

Each wears hung round the neck the gold ornament (seen in the photograph, Fig. 52, and in the drawing) called *sika* and *dwete 'srane,* i. e. gold and silver moons. These priests, who are dedicated to 'Nyame for life, cut their hair in a peculiar manner, the head being shaved save for a patch on the sides and down the middle. White clay is then smeared in three lines on the bald patches. White lines are drawn in like manner on the centre of the forehead, down each cheek (reaching up to the crown of the head), on each shoulder, upper arm, and across

the chest. The lines are smeared with the fingers, and the following words spoken: *Nyankopon Kwame wo hyiri eni o*, 'God, Kwame—i. e. whose day of service is a Saturday—this is your white clay, life to our master'. *Eto* (mashed yams) are cooked once a year by the priests, and upon the day appointed (a Saturday) the chief will place a spoonful in the pan upon top of the forked branch, with the words: '*Me Nyankopon me sere wo nkwa, na me sere wo ahooden*' (My God, I pray you for life and I pray you for strength). A sheep is also killed and the blood allowed to fall upon the ground; pieces of meat are threaded upon the skewers seen projecting from the forks of 'God's altar', with the words: 'Here is a sheep I kill for you, take and eat and give me health and strength.' After this ceremony the chief must sleep in the '*Nyame dan* (temple of the Sky God) for eight nights; one of his wives is allowed to sleep with him. At the end of this time two white fowls are killed, their flesh put on the skewers, and their blood and feathers smeared over the pole or stick of the altar. Besides this annual ceremony, a priest of one of the *abosom*, gods, may tell the chief or any one else that he must give a sacrifice to 'Nyame.

Quite apart from these ceremonial occasions, I do not suppose that a day passes among any of the old folk upon which some little offering is not cast upon the roof of the hut or placed on the altar beside the door to 'the great God of the Sky' who is, 'of all the earth, the King and Elder.'

I shall presently proceed to describe rites in connexion with the lesser, but for all practical purposes, really, the far more important, gods. Their power emanates from various sources, the chief of which is from the great spirit of the one God, graciously delegated by Him, that the affairs of mankind may have attention given to them.

XIV

RELIGION

The Gods (Abosom). The Making of a Shrine.

Before passing on to a detailed account of the ceremonies I witnessed in connexion with certain of the Ashanti gods, I propose to give a brief description of the origin and nature of these deities and of the composition and consecration of their shrines.

The word shrine is used, in this particular context, to designate the potential abode of a superhuman spirit. It consists (generally) of a brass pan, or bowl, which contains various ingredients. This pan, upon certain definite occasions, becomes the temporary dwelling, or resting-place, of a non-human spirit or spirits.

At the present day it is perhaps hardly necessary to state that such an object or shrine ('fetish' is what every English-speaking West African and most Europeans would wrongly term it) is, spiritually, an empty nothing until the particular spirit for which it has been consecrated, prepared, and made acceptable thinks fit to enter it. It possesses, it is true, a certain sanctity, by virtue of its being the potential abode of such a spiritual being.

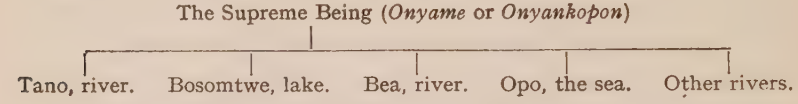
In another context—in dealing with the cult of ancestors —already described, it would be equally correct to call the blackened stools, into which the departed disembodied *human* spirits are called to enter, 'shrines', and again so to designate a rock, or stone, or a tree, which is the potential abode of a spiritual something.

Genealogy of the gods. There is known, from one end of Ashanti to the other, a popular myth, which I shall here only outline very briefly; it gives in simple and childish form the very basis of Ashanti theological beliefs. This myth recounts how 'Nyame—the Sky God—had various sons of whom one in particular was a *bayeyere* (favourite son). 'Nyame decided to send these children of his down to the earth in order that they might

receive benefits from, and confer them upon, mankind. All these sons bore the names of what are now rivers or lakes:

Tano (the great river of that name).
Bosomtwe (the great lake near Coomassie).
Bea (a river).
Opo (the sea).

and every other river or water of any importance. Thus in diagrammatic form we have:



The tributaries of these again are 'their children'.

In Ashanti, any water that dries up in the hot season is known by the title of a '*dan 'Nyame*' water (a rely-upon-God water).

Returning to our myth, I need not go into the whole story of how, owing to the machinations of the goat (an animal hateful to this god and taboo to his priests), the final resting-place of all the waters was not as really intended by 'Nyame. What has been said is sufficient to show that waters in Ashanti, some in a greater, others in a lesser degree, are all looked upon as containing the power or spirit of the divine Creator, and thus as being a great life-giving force. 'As a woman gives birth to a child, so may water to a god,' once said a priest to me.

When I first had time seriously to study Ashanti religious beliefs, it occurred to me that if we could know just what these miscalled 'fetishes'—the brass pans I have described—contained, and how they were made, and the rites in connexion with the making, we might be approaching the solution of a very difficult and very little understood problem. This idea grew and eventually led to a six-hundred-mile tramp in the quest of a god in the making—an account of which will be given later on in this volume.

I think, however, that now is the time and the place, before the reader is introduced into the presence of the gods, to give him an insight into what these brass pans do contain and the full significance of their contents.

The following is an account, from a reliable source, checked and rechecked from many independent witnesses, of the making

and consecration of a shrine for one of the Tano gods. What follows is from the vernacular. Except in the case of the actual incantation, which is, I think, so valuable that I give it in Ashanti also, I give the translation only.

A spirit may take possession of a man and he may appear to have gone mad, and this state may last sometimes even for a year. Then the priest of some powerful god may be consulted and he may discover, through his god, that it is some spirit which has come upon the man (or woman). The one upon whom the spirit has come is now bidden to prepare a brass pan, and collect water, leaves, and 'medicine' of specific kinds. The possessed one will dance, for sometimes two days, with short intervals for rest, to the accompaniment of drums and singing. Quite suddenly he will leap into the air and catch something in both his hands (or he may plunge into the river and emerge holding something he has brought up). He will in either case fold this thing to his breast, and water will be at once sprinkled upon it to cool it, when it will be thrust into the brass pan and quickly covered up. The following ingredients are now prepared: clay from one of the more sacred rivers, like the Tano, and the following medicinal plants and other objects: *afema* [*Justicia flavia*], *Dama Bo* [*Abras precatorius*]; the bark of the *odom*, a creeper called *hamakyem*, leaves and bark of a tree called *domine*, another creeper called *hamakyerehene*, any root that crosses a path, a projecting stump in a path over which passers-by would be likely to trip, also roots and stumps from under water, the leaves of a tree called *aya*—those are chosen which are seen to be quivering on the tree even though no wind is shaking them—the leaves, bark, and roots of a tree called *Bonsam dua* (lit. the wizard's tree), a nugget of virgin gold (gold that has been in use or circulation must not be used), a *bodom* (so called aggrey bead), and a long white bead called *gyanie*. The whole of these are pounded and placed in the pan, along with the original object already inside, while the following incantation or prayer is repeated:

'*Onyankopon Tweduampon Kwame, Asase Yaa, etwei ne haha ne nnono, nne Fofie o, na Ta Kwesi ye re si wo: ye re si wo ama ye anya nkwa, mma ye nya 'wuo, mma y' aso nsi, mma ye kote nso nwu: 'kuro yi 'dekuro nkwa so, mmerante nkwa so, mmawofoo nkwa so, 'kuro yi nkwada nkwa so.*

'Odum Abena a onyina 'wo no e, mo nyina na ye re fre mo 'ma mo nyina mo aba ama seisei ara ye nyina ye tiri mu asem ye de ahye 'bosom yi mu.

'Ye fre wo anadwo, ye fre wo awia, na se ye ka se ebia ye sei ma yen a, ewo se wo ye. Na mmra a ye re hye ama wo 'bosom yi ene se, ye ne ye mma ne ye nana nom, se Ohene bi na ofiri babi aba na ose ore ko 'sa na obe ka kyere wo na se oko ko ko na onni nim a, ese se wo ka kyere yen: se nso se oko na obe di nim a nso wo ka no nokware. Afei bieku bio, se nnipa na oyare anadwo, ana se awia, ye pagya wo soa na ye bisa se nnipa Asomasi na ore wuo, mmusuo a wo be kyere no mmusu turoro nye nkontompo.

'Nne ye 'kuro yi nyina ye mpanyin ne ye nkwadaa nyina ye nyina y'ako apam ye nyina y'aye ko sipe nni ye yem, ye nyina y'aye ko bafua pe se wo Ta Kwesi nne Fofie, nne na ye re si wo: y'afa 'guane y'afa akoko, y'afa nsa ye de re be ma wo ama w'atena 'kuro yi mu afwe 'kuro yi nkwa so. Efiri nne de kopim nne yi wo nguane ngya yen, efiri nne di kopim nne yi, wo Atanogya, asem biara wo be ka akyere yen wo ntwa yen akofwie, wo nfa nsuo so ngyina w'anum so nka asem nso mfa nkyere yen.

'Nne Ohene 'bosom ene wo (nne) o, nsamanfo 'bosom ene wo nne o. Okyena bi na 'Sante 'hene asem aba se ebia me ba Asomasi se me panyin bi yare na ebia bo mmoden na ko, se osoma 'bofo ma no ba a na wo re ko, nye se wo re guane agya yen.

'Ye nyina y'anum kasa bafua pe.'

'Supreme Being, upon whom men lean and do not fall, (whose day of observance is a Saturday). Earth Goddess, (whose day of worship is a Thursday), Leopard, and all beasts and plants of the forest, to-day is a sacred Friday; and you, Ta Kwesi (the particular god for whom in this case the shrine was being prepared), we are installing you, we are setting you (here), that we may have long life; do not let us get "Death"; do not let us become impotent; life to the head of this village; life to the young men of this village; life to those who bear children, and life to the children of this village.

'O tree, we call Odum Abena, (to whom belongs the silk cotton tree), we are all calling upon you that you may come, one and all, just now, that we may place in this shrine the thoughts that are in our heads.

'When we call upon you in the darkness, when we call upon you in the sunlight, and say, "Do such a thing for us", you will do so.

'And the laws that we are decreeing for you, you, this god

of ours, are these—if in our time, or in our children's, and our grandchildren's time a king should arise from somewhere, and come to us, and say he is going to war, when he tells you, and you well know that should he go to the fight he will not gain the victory, you must tell us so ; and should you know that he will go and conquer, then also state that truth.

' And yet again, if a man be ill in the night, or in the day-time, and we raise you aloft and place you upon the head, and we inquire of you saying, " Is So-and-so about to die ? ", let the cause of the misfortune which you tell him has come upon him be the real cause of the evil and not lies.

' To-day, we all in this town, all our elders, and all our children, have consulted together and agreed without dissent among us, we have all united and with one accord decided to establish your shrine, you, Ta Kwesi, upon this, a sacred Friday.

' We have taken a sheep, and a fowl, we have taken wine, we are about to give them to you that you may reside in this town and preserve its life. From this day, and so on to any future day, you must not fly and leave us. From this day, to any future day, you, O Tano's fire, in anything that you tell us, do not let it be a lie. Do not put water in your mouth and speak to us. To-day you become a god for the chief, to-day you have become a god for our spirit ancestors. Perhaps upon some to-morrow the Ashanti King may come and say, " My child So-and-so (or it may be an elder) is sick ", and ask you to go with him, or may be he will send a messenger here for you ; in such a case you may go and we will not think that you are fleeing from us.

And these words are a voice from the mouth of us all.'

The various sacrifices are then made, and in each case the blood is allowed to fall upon the contents in the brass pan.

I have had many similar accounts of the consecration of a new shrine as the temporary home of a new manifestation of a spirit universal and always present, but not subject to control.

It will be noted that other minor spirits, or powers of nature, are not wholly ignored or neglected, and that all are considered as able in some manner to help the greater spirit that is to be called upon to guide and assist mankind.

The priests tell me that at times, when this greater emanation of God is not present, that the spirits of some of the lesser ones will flash forth for a moment and disclose their presence. For example, a priest will suddenly burst forth, singing, *odoma e, die odo me omera* (' I am the *odoma* tree, let him who loves me come hither '). It seems that the priests and priestesses, when in the

ecstatic condition, are subject to many spirit influences. I have heard a priestess begin to talk in a different dialect from her own. This did not at all surprise the onlookers, who merely said, 'Oh, that is the spirit of So-and-so'—a dead priestess of the same god, who had come from another district, and had used that dialect.

I shall never forget the answer of an old priest with whom I remonstrated, chiefly to draw him out and see what he would say, for not trusting to the one spirit of the great God and leaving out all these lesser powers whose help was thus passively and indirectly involved. He replied as follows: 'We in Ashanti dare not worship the Sky God alone, or the Earth Goddess alone, or any one spirit. We have to protect ourselves against, and use when we can, the spirits of all things in the Sky and upon Earth. You go to the forest, see some wild animal, fire at it, kill it, and find you have killed a man. You dismiss your servant, but later find you miss him. You take your cutlass to hack at what you think is a branch, and find you have cut your own arm. There are people who can transform themselves into leopards; "the grass-land people" are especially good at turning into hyenas. There are witches who can make you wither and die. There are trees which fall upon and kill you. There are rivers which drown you. If I see four or five Europeans, I do not make much of one alone, and ignore the rest, lest they too may have power and hate me.'

I cannot, of course, be certain of the precise elements entering into the shrine of such a god as Ta Kora, the greatest of the Tano gods. His temple, as will be seen later, was quite free from the usual charms or 'fetishes' which are generally associated with the stock-in-trade of the priests.

Once the ingredients described have been put into the shrine, that is apparently an end of them. They are not directly mentioned, and it is only when the spirit of one of the ingredients of the shrine takes charge, as it were, for a moment, that they are even considered.[1]

The foregoing sketch will serve to introduce my readers to the ceremonies I now propose to describe in the next chapter.

[1] A row of shrines may be seen in Figs. 70–1.

XV

RELIGION

The Apo *Ceremony at Tekiman.*

That most delightful of raconteurs, Bosman, in one of his letters to 'his very good friend', described a ceremony which he said he had twice seen at Axim, on the Gold Coast.

Two centuries later, it was my privilege to witness this same ceremony in its own natural home, whence it had been transplanted to the coastal belt where Bosman had witnessed it, when performed by some of the ancestors of the very people I was now among. They had, centuries ago, according to their own and Brong traditions, migrated from the Gyaman country in Northern Ashanti and wandered south to the coast to become the present Fanti race. The tradition of this migration thus finds the most interesting confirmation in the two accounts of what are undoubtedly one and the same ceremony.

The Dutch historian of the Coast of Guinea wrote as follows:

'The Devil is annually banished all their towns with abundance of Ceremony, at an appointed time set apart for that end. I have twice seen it at Axim, where they make the greatest stir about it. This Procession is preceded by a Feast of eight days, accompanied with all manner of Singing, Skipping, Dancing, Mirth, and Jollity; in which time a perfect lampooning liberty is allowed, and Scandal so highly exalted, that they may freely sing of all the Faults, Villanies, and Frauds of their Superiours, as well as Inferiours without Punishment, or so much as the least interruption; and the only way to stop their mouths is to ply them lustily with Drink, which alters their tone immediately, and turns their Satyrical Ballads into Commendation Songs on the good Qualities of him who hath so nobly treated them. . . . When they have driven him (the Devil) far enough out of the Town, they all return, and thus conclude their eight Days Divine or rather Diabolical Service . . . and to make sure that he does not return to their Houses, the women wash and scour all their wooden and earthen vessels very neat, to free them from all Uncleaness and the Devil.'[1]

[1] Bosman's *Coast of Guinea*, Letter X.

I propose now to give a detailed account of what I saw during each day the ceremony lasted.

It was by good fortune, rather than design, that I arrived at Tekiman, in Northern Ashanti, on the 11th April 1922. I was on my way north to investigate the rites in connexion with the great Ashanti god, Tano—the Tando of Ellis and of Miss Kingsley. I arrived that day from Nkoranza, where I had been living for some time and making friends with the priests and 'old fetish women', as Mary Kingsley's African friend ungallantly described these very charming, old and young ladies, and my repute had reached Tekiman before me.

I had 'a good press', as we should say, for I was at once called upon by every one of note in their ecclesiastical world. A stroll round the town, which included a return call upon the *omanhene* (chief) and the presentation of letters of introduction from the Chief Commissioner of Ashanti, an impromptu exhibition in the court-yard of the 'palace' upon the big talking drums, upon which I drummed out the prelude of one of their set-pieces—the only one I knew—a certain reputation as an elephant hunter that had preceded me here—all these combined to make these people accept me as almost one of themselves.

I was told I had arrived upon the eve of a great annual ceremony, lasting eight days, and they all promised I should be permitted to go everywhere and see everything. A delightful little side-light upon the habitual 'canniness' of the Ashanti character was later revealed by the fact that the chief, to make everything absolutely in order, dispatched a runner that very night to Judd, the acting District Commissioner at Wenki, to inform him that a European *okomfo*—a white Witch Doctor, as the interpreter would possibly quite wrongly interpret it—had arrived on the scene, and was it quite all right?

The chief being informed that it was all right, and that the 'Witch Doctor' was to be considered as his, (Judd's,) guest as long as he was in that district, we all settled down, I taking up my abode in the tumble-down old rest-house on the outskirts of the town. Here I was to spend eight delightful days, and to entertain the priests and priestesses of many of the gods in this part of Ashanti, who had come in from all over the country to attend the ceremony. The *Apo* custom, as the Brong

commonly call it, is sometimes known as *Attenie*, and also *Ahorohorua*. The derivation of *Apo* is probably from the same root *po*, reduplicative *popo*, 'to speak roughly or harshly to' of *atennie*, *atem die*, 'to abuse, to insult'; and of *ahorohorua*, possibly *horo*, 'to wash, to cleanse'. To-day, as it did in Bosman's time, the ceremony lasts eight days. I once asked a semi-educated African what it was all about, and he replied that this was a fetish custom where every one cursed every one else, where morals were relaxed and promiscuity sanctioned, where all the fetishes were brought out to walk about, and where the witch doctors indulged in diabolical rites. That is very like Bosman's point of view. The following is another point of view. It is contained in a literal translation of what was told me by the old high-priest of the god Ta Kese at Tekiman. He said: 'You know that every one has a *sunsum* (soul) that may get hurt or knocked about or become sick, and so make the body ill. Very often, although there may be other causes, e. g. witchcraft, ill health is caused by the evil and the hate that another has in his head against you. Again, you too may have hatred in your head against another, because of something that person has done to you, and that, too, causes your *sunsum* to fret and become sick. Our forbears knew this to be the case, and so they ordained a time, once every year, when every man and woman, free man and slave, should have freedom to speak out just what was in their head, to tell their neighbours just what they thought of them, and of their actions, and not only their neighbours, but also the king or chief. When a man has spoken freely thus, he will feel his *sunsum* cool and quieted, and the *sunsum* of the other person against whom he has now openly spoken will be quieted also. The King of Ashanti may have killed your children, and you hate him. This has made him ill, and you ill, too; when you are allowed to say before his face what you think, you both benefit. That was why the King of Ashanti in ancient times, when he fell sick, would send for the Queen of Nkoranza to insult him, even though the time for the ceremony had not yet come round. It made him live longer and did him good.'

This is, I believe, getting nearer to the reason for this 'Lampooning Liberty' than either Bosman or my semi-educated

African friend ever arrived at, and I wonder if this logic may not have been behind the Saturnalia of the Ancients.

Examining now, before I proceed to an account of the ceremony, the general implication of moral laxity and licence, and of insobriety, all I can vouch for is that, from first to last, I never once saw a drunken man or woman—funeral celebrations are the occasions upon which the Ashanti really get drunk, but there are extenuating circumstances even there, as I have striven to show elsewhere—nor did I hear later of one case of adultery arising out of a celebration in which, theoretically, it seems to have had the sanction of custom.

The rules with regard to this point are very strict and well defined. Theoretically there appears to be a licence in regard to sexual intercourse, but in reality this is not so, and in any case in practice, this is completely nullified for the following reason : Custom enjoins that no redress for seduction or adultery may be claimed, or any complaint lodged, during the eight days the ceremony is in progress. Once this period has expired, all such cases are subject to trial before the customary native courts, and are liable to the ordinary sanctions of native customary law. In other words, if any one thinks it is worth while, he may commit an offence for which he knows punishment will be deferred until the rites are over, but after that period he will have to answer as in the ordinary course and pay the usual penalty for his delinquency.

On the other hand, should the aggrieved party, during the actual celebration of the *Apo* ceremony, bring any action, lodge any complaint, or make any violent scene, he immediately forfeits all right to have his case investigated later or to receive any satisfaction, and is himself heavily fined. These facts, in actual practice, seem more than a sufficient deterrent to any one inclined to take advantage of the respite from prosecution which the ceremony gives. There is a kind of carnival freedom, it is true, which permits of any man to say to any girl (except the king's or priests' wives), ' *Bo me tuo* ', which means, literally, ' fire a gun at me ', and the maiden so addressed is expected to whisk off her clothes, that is to say her cloth. But as every girl wears strings of beads round her waist and a little red cloth tucked into this bead girdle at the front and the back, and, as

Fig. 53. The *Apo* ceremony at Tekiman

Fig. 54. The *Apo* ceremony at Tekiman

FIG. 55. A shrine under an umbrella

FIG. 56. The gods taking the air

to stand nude in this country—where clothes were not worn in the not very remote past—is in no sense to stand ashamed, the whole effect is to produce results that are no more immoral to the African mind than it is for a European to ask a girl to unmask and to kiss her at a Continental carnival (Fig. 73).

The savage law-makers of old were never fools ; they legislated for law and peace and order in the clan, not for promiscuity, chaos, and bloodshed.

On the Tuesday, priests and priestesses and their followers, with the shrines of their various gods, kept arriving from all over the country, from Tanosu, Tuabodom, Ofori Kuron, Tano Oboase, &c., and towards evening all paraded up and down the broad street running through the town. The shrine of the great local god, Ta Kese or Ta Mensa, as he is variously called, and those of several other gods were carried upon the heads of their respective priests under gorgeous umbrellas of plush and velvet. The blackened stools of former priests and priestesses were also paraded, being supported upon the nape of the neck by their carriers. The various gods ' were taking the air and greeting each other ', I was informed. All their shrines, i. e. the brass pans, were of course covered over with coloured silk handkerchiefs and the contents were invisible. The priests, bearing these shrines, would go up to each other, and bending slightly forward, would allow the shrine of one god to touch that of another, in salutation. Priests and priestesses were sprinkled with white finely powdered clay on face, neck, shoulders, arms, and chest ; others attended them with flat basins or plates containing more of the white powder. They would constantly come up to me and, curtsying or kneeling down, would sprinkle some powder at my feet. There seemed no general plan, every one in the best of good humour strolled about greeting the other gods, i.e. their shrines, priests, priestesses, strangers, and townsfolk mingling in little cheery groups (see Figs. 53–6). The following day, Wednesday, none of the shrines of the gods were paraded, but all the people sat about outside their houses or outside the big temple of the god Ta Kese and conversed. I talked with the chief, who said : ' Wait until Friday when the people really begin to abuse me, and if you will come and do so too it will please me.' That afternoon bands composed entirely of women

ran up and down the long, wide street, with a curious lolloping, skipping step, singing *apo* songs. Later I got them to sing them into my phonograph. Space forbids me printing these songs in the original, so I give an English translation alone.

The god, Ta Kese, says if we have anything to speak, let us speak it,
For by so doing we are removing misfortune from the nation.

Your head is very large,
And we are taking the victory from out your hands.
O King, you are a fool.
We are taking the victory from out your hands
O King, you are impotent.
We are taking the victory from out your hands.

They know nothing about guns,
The Ashanti know nothing about guns.
Had they known about guns
Would they have let the white man seize
King Prempeh and Ya Akyaa [1] without firing a gun?

A e! a e! a e!
Buabasa is a proper fool
Since the Creator created all things
They (i. e. the kings of Ashanti) came from Adum, they who were to succeed (to the throne of Coomassie).
They did not come from Pinanko who were to succeed,
But these days it seems that they come from Pinanko who are to succeed.
Oh, Buabasa is a proper fool.
He causes the nation to be destroyed.[2]

Aframa [3] who bore ten children
Her son was Yaa Dwete,
Father eats his yams, but the people of
Nkoranza eat their cassava.
As for us, we eat our yams while the people of Nkoranza eat their cassava.

Grandfather Ta Kora is like a cat,
He is not the pet of one person alone.

[1] Ya Akyaa, the Queen Mother of Coomassie, died in exile in the Seychelles.

[2] Until the reign and banishment of King Prempeh (1896) all the Kings of Ashanti had lived in that part of Coomassie called Adum. When Prempeh was banished, I am informed, we put one, Buabasa (Opoku Mensa) to look after Coomassie and he lived in that part of the town called Pinanko.

[3] Aframa. The first Queen Mother of Tekiman.

Did I buy and give you to eat
That when they are leading me away
You should laugh at me?
These times have changed O Kojo Fojo,
O Kojo Fojo, these times have changed.

Ashanti, what do you here?
Do you taboo your own country?
Kon! kon! kon!
Your father and your mother.[1]

We made scales for the Ashanti porcupines.
They only used them to cheat us.

We are casting stones at Ati Akosua (a god).
The leopard Gya, the King's child,
We are casting stones at him.
How much more shall we cast stones
At the child of the bush cat?

(From this song it would appear that even the gods come in for some of the general abuse.)

The Ashanti people may be the children of slaves.
The King of Ashanti may have bought them, but he did not buy us.

All is well to-day.
We know that a Brong man eats rats,
But we never knew that one of royal blood eats rats.
But to-day we have seen our master, Ansah,[2] eating rats.
To-day all is well and we may say so, say so, say so.
At other times we may not say so, say so, say so.

Do you people know the child who is head of this town?
The child who is head of this town is called 'the helpful one'.
When he buys palm wine he helps himself to the pot as well.

To-day he has risen up.
We are the Creator's stars.
When we come out then some one of importance has come out.
(Sung by the young 'royals'.)

We are the useless sponges,
But we shall be called in in the day of necessity.
(Answering song by the villagers.)

[1] Ta Kora, the great god of Ashanti. It must be remembered that the Ashanti conquered the Tekiman people; most of these songs are directed against the former. To adjure your father and mother would ordinarily be considered a terrible insult. In my entourage were several Ashanti from Mampon and Coomassie, and many of their songs were in their honour.

[2] Mr. Ansah was my typist and clerk.

Upon the same day a crier, beating an *odawuru* (iron gong), went all round the town calling out the following proclamation.[1]

'The Chief says that I am to tell you that upon this *apo* festival which has come round you are (to celebrate it) by abusing him. And (during this time) if any one of you have a cause of quarrel with any one else, or if your friend should seduce your wife, or some one should insult you, and you do not keep your temper, but lodge a complaint, then you are bound by the oath of Wednesday and of Thursday, which make you liable to a penalty of *ntano* (£16 in gold dust). That is the end.'

It will be noted that this proclamation does not say anything about any relaxation in the standard of public morals, and merely insists on the fact that nothing is to be done to mar the happy and genial spirit in which the festival is to be conducted.

Friday, the 14th, was a great day. All the morning various priests and priestesses danced in public, surrounded by a great circle of onlookers. They danced, to the accompaniment of drums and singing, stripped to the waist and holding cow-tails (*bodua*) or swords (*afona*) in their hands, upon which they leaned from time to time (see Figs. 57–8). All were heavily powdered with white clay and most of them were covered with *suman* (fetishes or charms). The male priests wore the kilt made of palm-leaf fibre, called *doso*, with cotton drawers underneath (see Fig. 59). Men and women carrying plates containing powdered white clay followed them about and constantly sprinkled them with it. As I sat on a low stool in the front row of the great circle within which they danced, priests and priestesses would kneel down before me and sprinkle the white powder on the ground at my feet, or even over my bare knees (I was wearing shorts). Some of the male *akomfo* (priests) danced with wonderful agility, leaping into the air and pirouetting like Russian dancers. In the intervals, in which they rested, they walked round the circle greeting every one by placing their right hand between both the extended palms of the person saluted (Fig. 60).

Every now and then I would be presented with an egg. All

[1] '*Ohene se me ma monte se, apo a aba yi be po be yao no na wo ya biara a wo ne bi wo asene ana se wo yonko ape wo 'yere, ana se obi yao wo, se wo ansie abotere na se wo ka asem biara a wo to Wukuara ne Yaoda a wu tua ntanu—pa ! fwii !*'

Fig. 57. Priestesses resting upon *afona* (iron swords) after dancing

Fig. 58. Priestesses dancing with cow-tail switches in their hands

Fig. 59. A priest in kilt made of palm-leaf fibre

Fig. 60. A priest walking round shaking hands during an interval

Fig. 61. A shrine on a stool just about to be carried out to join the other gods

Fig. 62. One of the priests carried on a man's shoulders

Fig. 63. The head priestess and her companions went and sat down under their great umbrellas

Fig. 64. The priest . . . of Kum Aduasia impersonated a leopard

were very much interested in my reflex camera and anxious to peep into it and see the scene reflected in the ground glass. None of the shrines of the gods were brought out during the dancing (Fig. 61).

That same afternoon a great gathering of five to six hundred persons, assembled in the wide clearing near the chief's ' palace '. Here the chief, his sub-chief, and state officials, seated themselves in a great semi-circle under their huge coloured umbrellas, surrounded by sword-bearers, executioners, heralds, ' linguists ', &c. I was given a chair beside the chief. An Ashanti crowd upon such occasions seems to sort itself out, and order is maintained without an effort. The reason is that every one knows his place, assigned to him by immemorial custom, and falls naturally into it. Opposite the chief, in the great circle, a space was kept clear for the chief priestess of the god Ati Akosua, who was presently to take up her position there, with her retinue. After we were all seated, from the direction of the temple of the god Ta Kese came a long cavalcade, consisting of the priests and priestesses of the gods who were attending the festival. The high-priest of Ta Kese, a dear old man, with a noble and refined face, was carried aloft in a native basket hammock (*apakan*). The chief priestess was borne on the shoulders of one of her attendants, as was also one other priest (see Fig. 62). This line wheeled to the left and, beginning at the left wing of our semi-circle, went round greeting every one, sprinkling clay at the feet of many, and shaking hands in the manner already described. Several, I noticed, embraced the chief in a manner I had never before witnessed; taking his right hand in their own they raised their united hands above the head and each pressed his or her body against the other. After all the salutations were over, the head priestess and her companions went and sat down under their great umbrellas, opposite to our party, making the circle complete (Fig. 63).

The sub-chiefs, from outlying villages, now came and saluted the head chief, just as is done at the *Adae*.[1] Next, many of the *akomfo* danced. A friend of mine, who bore the rather awe-inspiring title of Kum Aduasia (the slayer of sixty), the priest of a god, who I much suspect was an elevated *suman*, impersonated

[1] Chap. V.

a leopard. His spots were very effectively rendered by daubing wet fingers upon his white-powdered body. He is to be seen in Fig. 64, exhausted by his efforts and supported by two men. As he danced, the following song was being sung to him, as a friendly warning, I believe, that his god was a bit out of hand:

Stop all these doings, such goings on and witchcraft walk together,
Grandfather, stop O!

I visited this excellent fellow later at his own village, Tanosu, and his god, from all I could see, was more *suman*, i.e. fetish, than *obosom* (god).

Another song I overheard as the dancing was in progress was:

The door of the ghosts has opened
And father is come.
The door of the ghosts has opened.

Besides the dancing of several other priests and priestesses, the old executioner amused every one by his antics, strutting about pretending to have a *sepow* knife through his tongue [1] (see Fig. 65).

Yet another song sung on this occasion was as follows:

Is to-day not a good day?
Is to-day not a good day?
The god who is King has risen up,
He is removing misfortune from the people.

None of the shrines of the gods were brought to this afternoon performance.

The head priestess sat under her umbrella and took no part in the dancing. She appeared to be in a trance. An attendant stood beside her with a plate containing powdered white clay (see Fig. 66). About 4 p.m. every one quietly dispersed, but that evening, about 6 o'clock, all the gods, that is to say, their shrines, were again paraded up and down the street. The greatest god, Ta Kese, was carried upon the head of the old chief priest, and also in turn by other priests. As the shrine

[1] In Ashanti, as soon as a person's death was decided upon, the very first thing to do was to drive a small knife through both cheeks and tongue, to prevent the victim 'cursing the King'.

Fig. 65. The executioner

Fig. 66. The head priestess . . . appeared to be in a trance

of this god was brought out of its temple, a medicine man, carrying a pot of water, ran up to it, waved the pot three times in front of the shrine, and quickly inverted the pot, placing it upon the ground; this ceremony is called *summum*. Priests walked behind the brass pan of Ta Kese with uplifted hands ready to catch it if it should fall from the head of its bearer, when under the influence of the spirit. Ta Kese and many other gods were under their own umbrellas.

The following gods, among others, were pointed out to me:

Ta Kese.	Ta Kwesi.	Ta Kofi.	Asubonten.
Ta Toa.	Ta Yao.	Ani Koko.	Obo Kyerewa.
Ta Kuntum.	Ta Kojo.	Ati Akosua.	Kum Aduasia.

Ta is a contraction of Tano.

Ani Koko means, literally, 'the red eyed one'.

Kum Aduasia, as already explained, means 'the slayer of sixty.

Asubonten is described elsewhere.[1]

Obo Kyerewa is the god of a priest, who only a few days after the events described, came to a terrible end.

Ati Akosua is the god that later spoke to me as the mouthpiece of the great Ta Kora.

There were also to be seen the stools of two dead priestesses, which, wrapped in cloths, were carried upon the heads of two women stool-carriers, under one great umbrella. Another group of men carried, upon the napes of their necks, the blackened stools of dead priests. The bands of women were running backwards and forwards singing the songs already given. As I was watching this wonderful scene, a priest came up to me and said that the high-priest of Ta Kese invited me to come under that god's state umbrella. (I suppose thirty men could shelter under it.) I did so with some slight misgivings, I must confess. As soon as I stood under the umbrella a priest presented me with four eggs. I thanked him for them, and was on the point of asking some one to take them for me, when suddenly he seized me in both his arms and gave me a violent hug, broke away before I could breathe a word of remonstrance, snatched one of the eggs, and swallowed it whole at one gulp. I was so amused at this feat that I forgot to be angry at his onslaught.

[1] Chapter XIX.

The remaining eggs, I was told, were to wash my *ntoro*.[1] Before dark all the gods were put back into the pantheon where is the shrine of Ta Kese.

That evening I strolled down to see the chief to ask him about the next day's ceremony. I found him sitting in the court-yard of his 'palace' listening to a story-teller. Somewhat like the late Miss Kingsley's 'Homer' he was, for he derived his inspirations from his hat, round the entire rim of which were suspended articles that represented or reminded him of some proverb, story, or riddle. You chose your little fancy, and he 'was off'. After listening to a few of his stories, I could not help thinking it was merciful and fortunate that Miss Kingsley could not understand a word of what her story-teller had to say, and so went away hoping and dreaming that it was some new Iliad to which she had listened.

The following day was the fourth of the festival. Nothing new was afoot in the morning; some fresh priests were dancing before the usual admiring circle, but the dancing and songs were very much the same as before.

In the afternoon I noticed a little group of people about twenty yards from the rest-house, several men, women, and boys. They were standing near a chair upon which was set a stool, upon which again was resting the shrine of a god with a pair of sandals placed upon it. There were also a couple of drums, two plates, one containing yellow-coloured powdered clay, and the other a few eggs, also a dress (*doso*) of a priest (*okomfo*). Presently, the priest, a rather striking-looking man, with a beard, came up and began to dress in the palm-fibre skirt and put on his *suman* (charms). I recognized him as a hunter I had met about a week before, with whom I had had a talk about elephants. He was delighted to see me and said he was about to go to the town to take part in a dance, but had come out here (about 400 yards from the town) to work up the spirit of his god upon him.[2]

When he was dressed and had powdered himself with the

[1] See Chap. II.

[2] Some of the lesser *akomfo* also combine other work with that of priest. Many are medicine men, and, following naturally on that pursuit which takes them to the forest, hunters. I know one who was hunter, drummer, priest, and medicine man.

Fig. 67. He then began to dance to the accompaniment of drums and singing

Fig. 68. The priest dancing, gazing into a mirror

Fig. 69. They danced holding two little wooden dolls

Fig 70. Some priests who attended the *Apo* ceremony

yellow clay,[1] picking up an egg from the dish near by he ran a few paces outside the circle of people and threw the egg upon the ground. This, he told me later, was to avert any ill which some other priest might will against his god. He then began to dance to the accompaniment of the drums and of singing. Sometimes he held the shrine upon his head, sometimes it was supported by an attendant (see Figs. 67 and 68). Suddenly he pounced upon a young girl standing in the group, called forward a spokesman, and bade him ask her why she was not yet married. (It appears the god had ordered her to do so some time ago—she had the reputation of wanting to have a good time before she settled down to matrimony.) The girl seemed very nervous, but promised she would soon marry.

The hunter-priest now set off for the town—the spirit well upon him—accompanied by his followers, and carrying his god upon his head. I accompanied them, and we went to a house or temple where the shrine of another god called Akua Tia was kept. Outside the yard of this temple he and another priest danced for about half an hour, and then we all proceeded to the house of the god Ta Kese. Here, in the court-yard outside the pantheon, was assembled a great concourse of people who crowded the verandah and open rooms round the compound, which was kept clear for the dancers and drummers and women with rattles made from gourds. The two priests greeted the old head priest, entered the temple for a moment, came out, and then began to dance. They would every now and then cast an egg into the air and intercept it with their head as it descended. They danced, holding two little wooden dolls, called Kwaku (a male) and Akua (a female), who are 'the speedy messengers of the gods', and who can 'go and come like the wind' (see Fig. 69). They danced, holding now a looking-glass, now a sword, and yet again a spear. 'In the mirror they can see things, that is why they smile.'[2] The dancing was kept up till late at night, and in the intervals they walked round and round the circle shaking hands with every one.

The following day was Sunday, the 16th. Several *akomfo* who had not danced before gave exhibitions in the street,

[1] Yellow, he told me, only because he could not get white.
[2] Some priestesses practise the art of water gazing.

surrounded by the admiring crowd. I was informed that many of the gods who had been brought in from outlying villages would return home before dawn on Monday, that they might have the water-sprinkling performed at their own particular local water, and this would complete the ceremonies.

Upon inquiring why the shrines were taken back in the night to their respective homes, I was told it was lest the gods might so have enjoyed their outing that they might not wish to return if their departure were delayed till daylight. There is always, in their minds, a dread lest the spirit, that upon occasions thinks fit to settle in the shrine that has been made acceptable to it, should not return to its home. Empty shrines in their temples, awaiting a time when the spirit that has left them and has never returned, will enter them again, testify to this belief.

On Monday, a most impressive rite took place. About 6 p.m. all the local gods, the shrines of which were permanently housed in the Ta Kese or other local temples, were formed up outside the Ta Kese house. Leading the procession were the shrines of fourteen lesser gods, carried upon the heads of young boys, and immediately behind these was Ta Kese and Ta Kwesi, each under its own enormous umbrella. On top of the shrines of these last-named deities were red fez caps—the badge of the Mohammedan in these parts.[1] Priests covered in white powdered clay and in white skirts were in attendance. One man carried a very large branch of the tree the Ashanti call *summe* (*Costus sp.*).[2] The blackened stools of former priests were also carried in the procession, which included:

Three executioners (*abrafo*).
One herald (*osene*).
One soul washer (*'kraguareni*).
Seven priestesses (*akomfo mma*), but one only with white clay upon her.
Three priests (*akomfo*) in white powdered clay.

[1] I was told by some that this was to signify a victory over some Mohammedan chief in one of the wars of the past, and by another that it signified that the Allah of the Mohammedan was just the same as the 'Nyame of the Ashanti.

[2] Much used in religious ceremonies, the smell of the tree is sometimes said to drive away ghosts.

Fig. 71. The highest shrine is that of Ta Kese

Fig. 72. The shrines of the lesser gods were ranged all round the walls

Several stool-carriers.

Fontomfrom drums carried on men's heads and beaten by drummers walking behind them. There was also one 'female' *tumpane* drum.

Many in the procession carried cow-tail switches and guns. A message was sent to the chief, saying:

'The year has come round, to-day the festival ends and we wish to go to the river.'

The chief replied:

'May no misfortune happen this new year that is now approaching, and may another year once again come round.'

He did not himself accompany the procession to the river, but was represented by his two spokesmen (*akyeame*). The Queen Mother, however, went. The cavalcade now set off to the Tano river, the path being lit up by men carrying bundles of palm-leaf stalks tied together. On arriving at the river, the more important of the shrines were set down, each upon its own stool, the lesser ones were put down resting each upon its circular head-pad (*kahiri*). One of the Tanokwa (attendants on Tano) now proceeded to draw a basin of water from the river, the following words being spoken:[1]

'*Onyankopon Tweaduampon, Asase Ya, Asase Boa ode ne' nsie, Etwie ode ye ha, Tano, mo adaworoma afe ano ahyia na ye de abosom nynia aba ne be bo yen asuo. Mo gyina ye akyiri akyigynia pa, mo mma bone biara nto yen. Ye de ye mma ne ye 'yere nom ne yeho hye mo nsa, mo mma bone biara nto yen.*'

'Sky God, upon whom men lean and do not fall, Goddess of Earth, Creature that rules the underworld, Leopard that possesses the forest, Tano River, by your kindness the edges of the year have met (i. e. the year has completed its circle), and we have brought all the shrines of the gods to sprinkle them with water. May you stand behind us with a good standing. Let no bad thing whatever overtake us. We give our children, we give our wives, we give ourselves into your hands, let no evil come upon us.'

[1] In ancient times, I was informed that this part of the river would have been closed for weeks that there might be no chance of the water being polluted. In fact this was the reason this ceremony was performed at night when the water passing would be more likely to be pure. Contamination, in this sense, would result from any woman bathing in the water who had her menses or after sexual intercourse.

White clay and *adwira* leaves were now mixed with the water. One of the *akyeame* (spokesmen) of one of the gods, not the chief's[1] held a branch of *summe* in each hand and spoke as follows :

'*Nana Ta Kese nne afe ano ahyia, ye de wo aba asuo mu. Ye re be bo wo asu, Etwie, ahaha ne nono, ne Asase Boa de nsie, ne Nyankopon Kwame, ne Asase Ya ne abosom nyina ewo wiase, mo nyina momera, se efi bi aka mo a, ye be bo mo asu.*'

' Grandfather, Ta Kese, to-day the cycle of the year has come round, and we have brought you to the river and we are about to sprinkle you with water. Leopard, Plants, Beasts, Creature that possesses the Underworld, God of the Sky, Thursday Goddess of Earth, and all gods in the world, come hither lest (during the past year) any foul thing has touched you, we are about to sprinkle you with water.'

Then dipping the *summe* leaves in the water he sprinkled each shrine in turn, beginning with Ta Kese, saying as he did so :

'*Ye sere wo nkwa, abofo ko wuram a, yenkum nam, mmawofo nwo mma. Yao Kramo nkwaso, abomofo nyina nkwaso, akomfo nyina nkwaso, ye de afrihyia yi apo a be hye asu yi mu.*'

' We beg you for life ; when hunters go to the forest, permit them to kill meat ; may the bearers of children bear children : life to Yao Kramo (the chief), life for all hunters, life to all priests, we have taken the *apo* of this year and put it in the river.'

Water was also sprinkled upon the stools and upon all present. Guns were fired and every one shouted : '*Okose o! okose o!*' ' Farewell ! farewell ! '

The brass pans (the shrines) were being scrubbed with sand and water, and after this was done, the outside of each pan was marked by three fingers moistened with wet clay, thus :

The shrines were once again covered over with their silk handkerchiefs, and all set out for home.

The head priest and the spokesman now took three long branches of *summe* and, after the last person had passed down the path, placed them across the road, between them and the

[1] Every god of importance has a whole court of functionaries based exactly on the model of a king's court.

river, and put a handful of sand and clay on top. All the evil of the past year was now behind, they said, and this was a precaution against any of it finding its way back.

Every one returned to the village; the shrines were replaced in the temples which were their homes. Here they were uncovered and *eto*, yams, placed upon them. They were still uncovered and these offerings still upon them when I visited the temple the following day (see Fig. 72). No songs were sung during these rites; occasionally the drums beat. Once they said:

'*Obarima ko, obarima n'wane,*' 'The hero fights, the hero does not run away.'

The new year for the Tekiman people began, I was informed, the next day. This was Tuesday, the 18th April 1922. About 9 a.m. on that day, the chief priest, and several priests and elders and I proceeded to the temple of Ta Kese. In front of this house were laid branches of *summe*, to mitigate, I was informed, the evil, should any one thoughtlessly break a taboo of this god. No women were present at the ceremony, though I was informed, the Queen Mother might have attended it. The Ta Kese temple, where the *Adae* already described took place, consists of one large room, with big double doors; there is a very small window, and a certain amount of light also comes through under the eaves. A pole runs from the centre of the floor to the ridge-pole of the roof, upon which were hung bunches of withered plantain leaves that had been used to cover former offerings of palm wine. The room faced east and west. The shrine of the chief god Ta Kese stood in one corner on a stool upon an altar made of mud. Four steps from the floor led up to the altar. The shrines of the lesser gods were ranged all round the east and west walls on a slightly raised portion of the floor, and three blackened stools (of former chief priests) were at the north end of the room. The spirits of the dead priests come into these stools. Amoa (i.e. his shrine), a god who is supposed to be the special messenger of the gods, stood at the foot of the centre pole. This shrine was covered entirely with creepers. This god, I was also told, is guardian and watchman for all the other gods. One priest said he was Ta Kese's son. A god of this name is to be found in many pantheons. He is sometimes

called *bayayere*, i.e. favourite or best beloved son. His habit, they say, is to enter the body of a poor man who will beg for alms; any one who refuses his request will later on become ill.

The chief, Yao Kramo, standing on a small raised platform, on the left of the altar, now removed his cloth from his shoulder and fluently and in a loud voice spoke as follows, while the old high-priest and two men who held a sheep stood beside him. His speech was punctuated by the loud *Yo! Yo!* of the Tano 'linguist'.

'*Aban mu Ta Kese, afe ano ahyia, ena me ne manfo yi ye fua ye nsam oguan yi de re ma wo, wo agyina yen akyiri akyigyina pa. Wa fre ahaha ne nono ama obawofo awo. Abofo de 'tuo ko wuran a, wa kum nam. Afenso me koo Krakye Dente ho ko gye nwa be gyina 'kuro yi, nne 'so nwa no ayera, wadaworoma wa bo mmoden ama nwa no efiri bio. Afenso animonyan wonsa aka afe yi ano yi, na bo 'dawuru se afe yi obiara nye ase basa basa, na se obi ye basa basa wo ase a, me gye no ntanu susu ampara so obiara anye bone. Wa hunu se oboroni fita na o ne wo apo awie a nne nso ote wo dan mu, nti animonyan a wo nya yi nsua. Wa be gye 'guan yi di Oboroni a owo ha yi nkwaso. Englis abrofo nyina nkwaso, nnipa a o ne yen nam nyina nkwaso afe oman yi nyina nkwaso, me Yao Kramo a me de 'kuro yi nkwaso, mma me kote nwu mma m'ani mfura, mma m'aso nsi, mma me nya Aban amane.*'

'Ta Kese of Aban,[1] the cycle of the year has come round, therefore I and these my people hold this sheep which is from our hands and give it to you. May you stand behind us with a good standing. May you call upon all the spirits of plants and beasts that the bearers of children may be fruitful, and that the hunter who takes his gun to go to the forest may kill meat. And again, I went to Krakye Dente[2] about snails, that they might remain near the town, nevertheless it is as if snails were lost, by your graciousness permit that snails may come forth again. Yet again, by the condescension with which your hand has rested upon this (past) year I beat the *odawuru* (gong), saying that no one was to act wantonly this year during the festival, and saying that if any one did so I should fine him £16—owing to all this, verily no one has done any wrong.

[1] That part of the town of Tekiman where the temple of Ta Kese stands is so called.

[2] A famous oracle that has head-quarters in a cave near the Volta River in what is now a portion of the mandated territory of Togoland.

'You have seen that a white man has been present with you throughout all the Apo ceremony, and that to-day he sits in your room, therefore the distinction you receive is not small.

'May you come and receive this sheep and eat.

'Life to the white man who is present, life to all the English white men, life to all those who walk with him (my companions from Southern Ashanti); life to all this people, life to me, Yao Kramo, who rule this town; do not let me become impotent, do not let my eyes become covered over, do not let my ears become stopped up, grant that I may have no quarrel with the Castle (the Government).'

He then stabbed the sheep in the throat while it was held above the shrine of Ta Kese so that some of its blood dripped into the pan. Next it was held over each shrine in turn that a little blood might fall upon it, and was also held over the blackened stools, and last of all over Amoa. It was then carried outside into the yard and held for a moment against the *fontomfrom* drums that blood might fall upon them. The carcase was cut up in the court-yard, in the usual manner. Some of the meat, lungs, and intestines were carried into the temple, laid upon the ground near the altar, and cut up into small pieces, some were placed in the brass pans, some on the stools, and the rest shared out among those present.

In Figs. 70 and 71, which show the rows of shrines, the man cutting up these offerings may be seen. The room in which the photograph was taken was comparatively dark and a very long exposure of course had to be given, so that the human figure shown is not clearly defined owing to it having moved.

No wine was given as an offering. The chief now stood up and said in a loud voice:

'*Yen nyina nyina nhira e*' ('We invoke blessings').

Every one answered:

'*Okuse o, yen nyina hyira e, okuse o. Ye hyira Yao Kramo o okus o*' ('Farewell, blessings upon all, farewell. We invoke blessings upon Yao Kramo').

The meat and other offerings left upon the shrines, I was informed, would be removed that afternoon; some of the pieces of meat would be threaded upon wooden skewers, roasted, and eaten by the chief priest and the chief.

On p. 161 I have referred to a tragedy in connexion with the priest of Obo Kyerewa.

Not long after the events just described, this young priest, called Kofi Afona, whom I had met during the *Apo* ceremony (his photograph may be seen in Fig. 72), was carried into Tekiman suffering from a terrible wound. I was called to see him and found the poor fellow upon his hands and knees, and only able to walk thus on all fours. From his buttock protruded the socket of an iron spear, the point of which I could feel under the skin a foot up his side. The spear[1] was a *barbed* one and to extract it without a surgical operation was impossible. The nearest doctor was some thirty-six miles distant, so I ordered the chief to get a hammock and carriers ready. I did what I could to plug the wound with dressings and gave the poor man brandy. I have never seen a more plucky fellow. His only idea seemed to be that I should not get my clothes stained from his wound. He told me the accident had happened while he was hunting a *mampam* (iguana). He had followed the great lizard up a tree, jabbed at it with his spear, and missed it, when it had jumped down. He had then thrown down his spear, the iron-shod butt had stuck in the ground, its point thus being upwards; upon this barbed end the priest had fallen as he slid backwards down the tree. Kofi Afona knew he was going to die. He said: 'Tano will soon call me, I know I am dying, thank you for what you have done.'

There seemed an interminable delay in getting the hammock and the hammock men, and an extraordinary apathy on the part of every one. I try never to lose my temper with Africans, but in this case I did so sadly, and I struck one man standing idly by, who made no movement when I bade him go and see what was the reason of the delay. He moved away but did not go upon the errand. My feelings were those of amazement and disgust at such indifference to suffering. Eventually my police orderly and I commandeered a hammock and six men, while the chief only half-heartedly assisted after I had threatened to hold him responsible for the man's death if he did not make it possible to use the only chance to save him. Accompanied

[1] This spear, which was now called *odiawuo* (lit. the murderer), was forfeited and became the property of the chief.

by my orderly they set out about 4 p.m. for Sunyani with written orders to villages *en route* to supply relays of carriers. My orderly returned a couple of days later saying that the priest had died on the way about 4 a.m. next morning. He had sent me a message, saying, ' Bid good-bye to the white *akomfo*, tell him Tano calls me and thank him.'

I went to see the old priest of Ta Kese and we began to talk about the tragedy. He said: ' Yes, of course he died. Did you not know that a *mampam* was a " red taboo " of his god? He should not have tried to kill it.' Then I understood everything—the apparent indifference and utter callousness were neither the one nor the other, it was a natural dislike to interfere with the decrees of a god who had passed a just sentence. Once again, ' *tout savoir, tout pardonner* '.

I later, after some inquiry, found the man I had struck, and expressed my regret. He replied that he had not borne me any malice, as he knew I did not understand. I discovered that he was the chief of N——, and we later became great friends. I went to his village to hunt the very elusive *otromo* (bongo), which it is said no European has ever yet shot in these parts, and is, to the Ashanti, the most dangerous animal—not physically but spiritually—in all his forests.

XVI

RELIGION

The God Tano (Ta Kora). A Visit to his Temple.

After nearly nine months' anthropological work in Southern and Central Ashanti, I was advised by many African friends and helpers to visit the northern parts—' the home of the gods ' —and the factory, so to speak, of their shrines.

It is here that Tano or Ta Kora, the greatest of the Ashanti gods upon earth, has his head-quarters, near the source of the great water of that name, the spiritual part of which he really is. The primary object of my visit was, if possible, actually to witness the ceremony I have described elsewhere, i.e. the making and consecration of a shrine for a god. Though I failed in that object, much good resulted from this somewhat ambitious quest, as I was permitted, I believe, to see and to hear things—in mitigation of my possible disappointment—that otherwise might have been hidden from me.

At Tekiman, where the *Apo* ceremony already described took place, I had laid a request before the high-priest of Ta Kese that the priesthood would make for me a shrine into which they would call an emanation of the spirit of their local god, thus creating ' a child of Ta Kese '. As the result of firm friendship laid during the *Apo* ceremonies, they had actually consented to do so, and there only remained certain details to settle, as, for example, whether I was to be permitted to take the shrine to Europe or whether it should remain in their pantheon, and various questions as to its taboos being kept. I promised that I would not be offended or consider myself cheated if the spirit refused to manifest itself to me and for me.

Perhaps being over-confident in my powers of persuasion, I determined to aim still higher and witness the making of a shrine for ' a child ' of the great Tano himself ; so instead of being contented with their offer, I decided to set out for Tano Oboase, a small village near the source of the Tano river.

Fig. 73. Brong girls at the *Apo* ceremony

Fig. 74. The outside of Ta Kora's temple at Tano Oboase

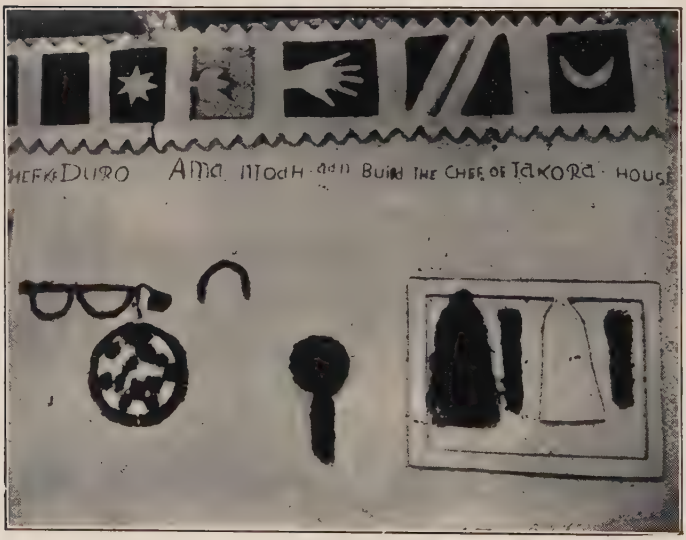


Fig. 75. The mural designs on the wall of Ta Kora's temple

Here, I hoped, once the high-priest got to know me, that I should be granted a similar request. Arrived at Tano Oboase (lit. Tano beneath the rock), I put up at the Queen Mother's house. Ama Toa (the Queen Mother) was not in the village, having gone to Mampon, but her daughters made me welcome and gave me two rooms facing on the open court-yard. The temple of the god Ta Kora was almost exactly opposite, across the wide street which runs through the centre of the village. This temple was by far the most elaborate and the best constructed I had seen anywhere in Ashanti. The surface of the walls, outside and inside, were decorated with elaborate mural paintings, some flush with the wall, others standing out in low relief. The colours used were black and red, the black being, I believe, coal tar, the red, clay (see Figs. 74–6).

It might be supposed that such elaborate ornamentation upon a building of this nature must have some special significance in relation with the particular cult. Such, however, did not appear to be the case; when I inquired later from the priest what these paintings represented, he said he did not know all of them, as they had been done according to the fancy of the bricklayer or mason who had built the house, who no doubt had conformed to certain customary standards and designs. Some of these mural paintings were later explained to me, and before I go further I will give the explanation of such as were known.

Beginning with Fig. 75, the dado along the top is chiefly composed of stars and moons and suns, with every now and then a hand. The heavenly bodies are of course here depicted in connexion with the Supreme God, 'Nyame. The hand, which I have seen in many buildings, is simply 'the hand of the craftsman'. 'That is my hand that did the work,' the artist will often tell you. The writing on the wall below the dado runs: 'CHEF KF DURO AMA NTOAH adn BUILD THE CHEF OF TA KORA HOUSE.' This stands, I think, for Chief Kofi Duro (the chief priest and also chief of the town; he combines the two functions), Ama Ntoah (the Queen Mother?), 'adn' is for 'and'. The inscription may be read as meaning, 'And it is they who built the house for the chief god Ta Kora.'

Below the dado and the lettering, from left to right, are fetters, which in the Ashanti mind in this connexion are

associated with a binding, an idea which occurs again in their stools where, as will be seen later (see Fig. 106), fetters are employed ' to bind down the owner's soul to the stool '. A similar device is seen on a *kuduo* (see Fig. 129), with, I am almost certain, the same underlying idea; the design is also found in Ashanti weights. The circular object is, I was told, a *kahiri*, i.e. the head-rest upon which a load or, in this case, a shrine is placed.

The bow is a rainbow (called literally the Sky God's bow).

The next design depicts a rattle (*ntorowa*) used in dancing at religious ceremonies. It may be noted that all dancing in Ashanti has probably a religious significance.

The objects inside the frame are *adawuru* (iron gongs) and the sticks with which they are beaten. These are much used in religious ceremonies for summoning the spirit of a god. The priest in Fig. 62 may be seen to be holding one which he is beating.

In Fig. 74 the design like a draught-board resting upon a stool, and viewed from above, is the game of *wari*. The object beside the Dane gun is a hunter's belt with pouches and knife. Above the *wari* board is a single fetter. The bird is a fowl (a cock?). What the cross depicts I could not find out; it will be noted later that a similar emblem was sewn in cowrie shells upon the altar cloth.

In Fig. 74 the object on the right of the ' gongs ' is an *afona* (a sword); the meaning of the design next it I could not find out, nor the names of the two animals; the bow is a rainbow; the object immediately under the mouth of the animal on the left is a corn cob.

Fig. 76 depicts the inside of the court-yard and shows the entrance to the room in which the shrine of Ta Kora and other shrines are kept.

The paintings upon the outside wall from left to right are:

(*a*) A leopard, with an antelope in its mouth.

(*b*) A cock, fastened by one leg to a stick.

(*c*) A hen.

(*d*) A corn cob.

(*e*) (On the right of doorway) a Dane or flint gun, and below that a long pipe.

The mural paintings inside will be noted later. Through the

Fig. 76. Inside the court-yard of the temple

Fig. 77. The shrine and altar of Ta Kora

window may be seen the striped cloth covering the altar of the great god Ta Kora.

The design on each side of the steps may be compared with that of the temple to the Sky God (see Frontispiece).

Lying inside the doorway is a ' white stool ', turned over on its side lest any wandering ghost should wish to sit upon it.

At the side of the doorway is a calabash used for the wine offering.

I arrived at Tano Oboase on Thursday, the 4th May 1922, and I propose to give an account of each day's events, but restricting myself to matters having direct bearing upon the cult of the gods.

The evening I arrived, Kofi Duro, who was the chief of the town, and also high-priest of Ta Kora, a perfectly charming old gentleman with a benign and intellectual face, the elders of the town, and various other hangers-on who came out of curiosity, all came to see me after dinner. I well recollect it was a beautiful night with a pale moon in her first quarter. We all sat in the yard in the Queen Mother's compound.

I was introduced by the representative from Tekiman who had accompanied me, and plunged at once into the object of my visit, which I told them was to ask their permission to have a new god made for me, i.e. a new shrine which would be acceptable to the spirit which in itself was as old as the world. I gave them my reasons for making the request, and told them briefly what I had already seen and knew about their country, letting them see that I was already conversant with certain rites and customs that they knew only a privileged few among their own race had ever seen. I talked in Ashanti of course and it was delightful to see, as I had so often seen, the barriers of suspicion and mistrust, that the ' bush ' African always feels for the European, being broken down as I spoke.

My friends Kwaku Abu and Wisirika, men of great standing and repute who had accompanied me from Southern Ashanti, then stood up and spoke with considerable eloquence on my behalf, telling how the work I was doing was for the whole Ashanti nation, and pleading in their own language and in their own way, though they knew it not, the cause of anthropology, which is to lead to the better understanding of the two races.

The old high-priest and the elders and those who came with them, none of whom, it must be recollected, I had ever seen before, rose up and took my hand and thanked me, and I knew that, whether or not my very unusual request would be granted, we would all be real friends. Kofi Duro said that it was impossible to give an answer at once, but that to-morrow was Fofie (a sacred Friday), that Ta Kora would be worshipped in any case upon that day, that I might attend, and that my request would then be placed before him. The interview was then broken off.

That night, about midnight, there was a tornado, and a small tree about fifteen yards from my camp bed was split from top to bottom by lightning. I thought the house I was in had been struck, and so evidently did all its other occupants, for a perfect pandemonium raged among pigs, sheep, and fowls in the compound. Early next morning I went to examine the extent of the damage and found the tree mentioned had been cleft as if with a very blunt wedge or axe from the top to within about a foot of the ground, when the current had left it and entered the ground, making a hole. The tree, strangely enough, was not blackened or charred in the least. As I was standing in my pyjamas examining it, one of the villagers came up and, after looking at it, said that God's axe (*'Nyame akuma*)[1] had, after splitting the tree, passed underground to the river where no doubt it would some day be found.[1] I was told later that the fact that no house was struck and no one killed was taken as a favourable omen. Had I been killed, I am afraid the cause of anthropology in these parts would have received a set-back from which it would hardly have recovered. Untoward events of this kind may easily upset the best intentions and the best-laid plans, and I am not quite sure but for that thunder-storm I might have been able to describe at first, instead of at second hand, the making of a shrine for the gods. However, things certainly might have been worse.

Early next morning, Friday, the 5th May 1922—a sacred Friday—we all met in the court-yard of the Ta Kora temple. As you enter the door, seen in Fig. 74, the room in which are the shrines is on the left. Opposite that room is another with

[1] See article on neolithic implements, Chap. XXVI.

Fig. 78. The old 'red' priest leaning forward towards the god

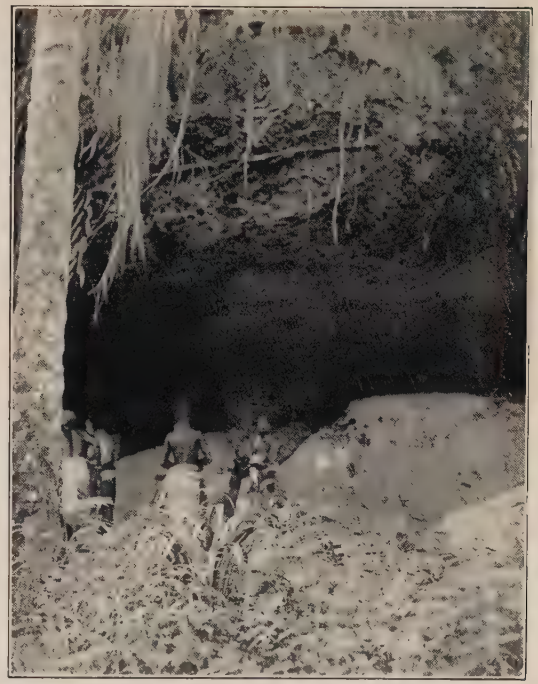


Fig. 79. Ame Yao's cave

only three walls which is used for cooking the offerings of yams, &c. At right angles to these, at each end are the rooms in which Tano's drums are kept. As we entered the yard, a drummer, beating a drum called *mpintoa*, played a dance tune called variously *akyea* or *nantewene*, in which the dancers walk stooping, with slow, affected, strutting steps.[1] Another dance was also played called *Odamani koto koko* from the opening words of the song which accompanies it, which runs :

' The people of to-day go and buy coco yams and ask for salt to put in them.'

The high-priest Kofi Duro, another priest with reddish hair and a red skin (an albino), several other old priests, and I now entered the room where the shrine of Ta Kora was kept. The god's brass pan stood on a raised altar at one corner of the temple. This altar was covered with a native-woven striped cloth (see Fig. 77). In front of Ta Kora, but lower down, was the shrine of another god, Ati Akosua (which, it will be recollected, had attended the *Apo* festival). There was near it one other shrine, that of the god Ta Kwesi, which I had also seen at Tekiman.

The old priest, who had three lines of clay upon his shoulders and arms, and several other of the priests now set down their stools before the altar upon which stood the shrine of Ta Kora. A cloth was spread upon the floor a little to the left of these men, and another priest set his stool upon it and seated himself. The rest of us ranged ourselves facing them.

The shrine of the god Ati Akosua was now uncovered. A *kahiri* (circular head-rest) (see Fig. 78, in which it can be seen beneath the brass pan on the priest's head) was handed to the high-priest. He received it, sprayed some spittle from his mouth upon it, pressed it to his forehead, then to his breast, passed it, as he sat, under his left knee, then taking it in his left hand passed it to the priest who was seated upon his stool on the cloth carpet and was ' to carry the god '.

This priest, settling himself firmly on his stool, arranged his feet upon the cloth so that only his heels rested upon it, put the head-rest upon his head, and upon this was immediately set the brass pan or shrine of Ati Akosua. In his hand he held

[1] *akyea* means to walk thus.

a cow-tail switch (*bodua*), upon the handle end of which were strands of palm fibre called *edoa dokum*. He sat thus perfectly motionless.

It will be noted that the shrine of Ati Akosua not Ta Kora was used. I was later informed that just as upon earth it is not etiquette for a king to speak direct to any one except through his official mouthpiece or spokesman, the *okyeame* (usually but quite wrongly rendered 'linguist' throughout the Gold Coast), so with the gods, each had his *okyeame*.

The old red priest, who was sitting near, just on the left of the priest carrying the shrine, and may be seen in Fig. 78,[1] now spoke in a low voice as follows:

Odomankoma obosom, ankobi na huni Nkadomako okyere abrane
Ohene Ame Yao obosom
Asante 'hene obosom
Woye sa kum nkora miensa
Obosom a ofiri bomu
Wo na wokum Adinkira
Ohene a yede kosua fufuo guare no
Wo na wo nkwanta aye hu
Ope wo afwe asei wo, asai wo a nsai
Nokware obosom, ose na ewom
Wo na odawuru bo Nyamefrebere
Wo ko babi a, bra
Kwampiri asu o yiri a, na ye fre wo
Abiridi abrade ete 'Nyame so
Wo na wonwene akwan tene mu
Nne Fofie, na ye re pe wo anim afwe
Na waba abetie die ye re ka akyerewo.

Creator's god, who sees even though he be not present.
Nkadomako [a title] who seizes strong men,
God of the King Ame Yao,
God of the King of Ashanti,
You did such and such a thing and slew 'the three old men'.
God who comes from within the rock,
You who slew Adinkira,
King, whom we bathe with white eggs.

[1] This and the other photos were taken in a very badly lighted interior; about one minute exposure was given. It may be judged from this fact with what intense interest every one sat almost motionless.

You, the cross-roads leading to whose dwelling are a fearful place.
He who would see you in order to destroy you, with that destruction be not destroyed.
God who is truthful, when you speak there is truth in what you say.
You whose *odawuru* [gong] sounds even to Mecca.
If you have gone elsewhere, come (hither).
Kwampiri [a title], upon whom, when the waters are in flood, we call,
Shooting stars, that abide with the Supreme Being,
You weave [as it were] a thread [in a loom] across a path stretching afar.
To-day is sacred Friday and we wish to behold your face,
So come and listen to what we have to tell you.[1]

When he had finished, every one sat motionless, the old red priest leaning forward towards the god, with an expression of intense alertness, to await his reply. This expression has been caught in a remarkable manner by the camera (see Fig. 78), the little click of which broke upon a silence that was so intense that the deep breathing of those present could be heard.

This silence lasted about a minute, when the priest supporting the shrine upon his head suddenly began to twitch from head to foot and raise his right hand from his side and slap the side of the brass pan with his flat palm. This, I heard later, was a sign that the spirit of the god had entered the shrine and thence passed into the medium—the priest.

Every one with one breath said:

'*Nana makye o*' 'Grandsire, good morning'.

The 'linguist' of the chief (who, it must be remembered, was also high-priest) now called upon the representative of the Tekiman priest, who had accompanied me, to state the object of my visit. This man stood up and said (in the vernacular of course) that I had come to see the great Ta Kora, that I knew and had witnessed many of the most sacred rites of the Ashanti, that I had just come from being present at the *Apo* ceremony,

[1] This beautiful prayer is packed with historical allusions to which I cannot, in this volume, do more than draw attention. Amo Yao was one of the early Kings of Tekiman, whose cave will be described later. Adinkira was the famous King of Gyaman (now the French Ivory Coast), conquered and slain by the famous Ashanti king Bonsu, the elder. Mecca is well known to the Ashanti, who call it 'the place men call upon the Supreme Being'. 'The three old men' are they after whom Nkoranza is named.

that though I well knew how the shrines of the gods were made, I had never actually witnessed their making and consecration, and that as I knew that he, Ta Kora, was the greatest of the Ashanti gods on earth, I had come to ask his permission for the priests to make a new shrine, which, when made, I would either leave in charge of the priests or take with me to Europe, whichever they desired.

All the time he was saying this the priest carrying the god was slapping the side of its brass pan with his right hand.

He now began to quiver, every muscle of his body seemed to twitch: his heels worked spasmodically upon the carpet; he removed the fibre end of the cow tail from his mouth—he had been holding it between his teeth—and holding it upright in his right hand called out the names of the two 'linguists' who were present, and then spoke as follows:

'*Efiri Osai Tutu pen so de be si Agyiman ne pen so asem a ehyia no se obe kyere me a, me ye ma no. Ohene Bonsu ore ko kum Adinkira obe ka kyere me ma me boa no, na wanka kyere me se me nkyere me ba bi ma no. Me nye akora ma adie sei a, na me kora nti na be fre me de Tano Kora na obae yi se ne biribi na asai a na nka ose me nkora no a anka me hu, na se ose me nkyere me ba bi ma no, die me ntumi sa.*'

'From the time of Osai Tutu until the reign of Agyiman,[1] if any one were in need and he came to me and told me, I made it right for him. When King Bonsu was going to slay Adinkira (King of Gyaman) and came and told me, I gave him help, but he did not tell me to seize one of my sons and give him. I am not named "Akora" because I am old (*akora*, an old man), but I am called Ta Kora; if it be that anything is spoiled I mend it (*kora*, to mend). Now if he had come to me and said that something of his was spoiled and had asked me to mend it, then had I seen the path clear, but he says that I must take one of my sons and give him, but that I am unable to do.'

Here the priest paused for a while, all the time slapping the side of the pan. He continued:

'*Nnipa a odo me na wa ba me nkyen, se oreko a me gyina n'akyi, ma gya no kwan pa ma no ako. Wa ba yi obe ko ma 'bo mu a mo ma no 'kwan ma no nko; nko fwe bere me te: se obeko asum a mo ma no nko, nko bo ne ho asu. Me mma ne me na' pi*

[1] *Agyiman*, another name for King Kwaku Dua I.

se ye be ko ' school ', nso me nsi ye kwan, se yen ko som 'Nyame meara mu 'Nyame ba ne, me na se oboroni fita se odo me na waben me nkyen a me'nso me gyina n'akyi.'

' The man who loves me comes to me, and when he goes away I shall stand behind him and accompany him on a good path that he may go his way. And this one who has come, grant him permission to go to my rock should he wish to go. Let him go and behold the place where I reside. Should he wish to go to the water (the Tano), allow him to go and sprinkle himself with water. Many of my children say they will go to school, and I do not stand in their path, and say they must not serve the Supreme God. In my own being I am the son of God, and if my grandchildren say that the white man loves me and has drawn nigh to me, I, too, shall stand behind him.'[1]

He ceased speaking, and after a pause I stood up and said I had heard all the words of Ta Kora and thanked him for his permission to visit his cave and his water. I said I was much struck with the god's attitude towards our education and religion, and that we English, too, allowed all men freedom in what they believed. I said all the children should be encouraged to go to school and hear more about 'Nyame—the Supreme Being—who was really the very same God they themselves knew and worshipped, as all their old men told me, long before any Europeans came to this land.

This was repeated by the ' red priest '.

The priest ' carrying the god ' replied :

' *Me da mo ase,*' ' I thank you.'

He then said, ' *Me ko tena 'se.*' ' I am going to sit down.'

Thereupon the brass pan was quickly removed from his head. He shook off the *kahiri* (head-rest), which rolled upon the ground. I noticed the old priest and others peered forward and watched it closely, and I was afterwards told that according as it fell upon one side or the other so they knew if the god wished to speak again or not. In the former case the shrine would be replaced upon the priest's head.

As soon as the shrine was removed from the priest's head he appeared to sit dazed for a few moments, then he put his hand to his face and passed it over his eyes like a man awakening from

[1] The tolerance of this pagan god may seem remarkable. It finds a parallel in the oracle at Delphi which was said to have declared that the proper religion for a man was that of his own country.

sleep or from a trance. He told me later he knew nothing of what he had said until informed by others present.

The head priest now said that only a short time would elapse before the ordinary *Fofie* ceremonies began. I spent this interval in having a look round the temple and conversing with the old priest.

The most remarkable feature about this interior was the total absence of the *suman* or charms that usually adorn the walls of most Ashanti temples. Upon the walls near to the altar were mural paintings depicting a Dane or flint-lock gun with a sling, a small antelope, a folding mirror (such as the priest in Fig. 68 is seen holding), an *odawuru* (gong), and a corn cob. These, like the paintings already described, the old priest told me, had been done by the builder. The priests were also devoid of the usual medicine charms so commonly worn by their class. 'Ta Kora came from 'Nyame, the Sky God, and needs no help from ordinary *suman*,' said the old priest when I remarked on the lack of these, and he added: '*Suman* spoil the gods, but I cannot stop most priests using them.'

Grouped round the walls of the temple and raised a little from the floor upon their stools were several shrines—all but two of these, I was informed, were now mere empty receptacles. The priests who had formerly tended them, when they were active shrines, had died, and since then the spirit that had formerly manifested itself within them has ceased to do so. 'Some day this spirit might descend upon some one who would then become their priest.'

Several priests and priestesses I had spoken to had told me that this was how they had first become priests. They had been seized with a spirit and had either lost all consciousness or seemingly had become mad. A god would be consulted, and he might say it was the effect of an outpouring of such and such a spirit, in which case, if there were a shrine already, such as has been described, its cult would be once again revived. If no shrine existed, then a new abode would be prepared.

The following, I was informed, are the taboos of the god Ta Kora.

(*a*) Rust-coloured mourning cloth (*kuntunkuni*).

(*b*) Black cloth (called *sibiri*).

(*c*) Any ninth child (*nkroma*).

(*d*) The *ambra*, a red monkey (*Cercopithecus ruber*). Should the name of this monkey be even mentioned in the presence of a priest while he is eating, he may not touch any more of that food, which will be thrown away or given to children.

(*e*) Menstruating women. Ta Kora seems especially indifferent or even hostile to women. They are ungrateful creatures (*bonniaye*), he declares. No women are allowed to touch his shrine, and he has no female *akomfo* of his own. Priestesses of other gods are, however, freely allowed in his temple, as I was to note presently.

(*f*) Donkeys.

(*g*) Guinea corn (*atoko*).

The people now began to collect for the celebration of *Fofie*, and the room was quite full when the rites began.

Three eggs were now handed to the chief priest. He cracked one against the altar and, stooping down, allowed the white to fall into a plate; the yolk he poured into the palm of his right hand and immediately began to rub it over the flat, smooth surface which formed the top layer of the contents of the shrine of Ta Kora, saying as he did so:

'Obom' 'hene, nne Fofie, wo ko so, nne na wofiri.
Me fua 'nsam' kesua me de re ma wo.
Tekiman 'hene nkwaso.
Oboase man nkwaso.
Nkoranza 'hene nkwaso.
Nsuta 'hene nkwaso.
Duaben 'hene nkwaso.
Asante 'man nkwaso.
Oboroni nkwaso, ma no nkye se die wo Ta Kora wakyere bomu.
Nkrofo a o ne ye nam nkwaso.
Mma m'aso nsi: mma m'ani mfura: mma me kote nwu.
Wo, na ye fre wo obom' 'hene preko gye kesua yi di: ne Fofie wo agyina yen akyiri akyigyina pa.'

'King of within the rock, to-day is sacred Friday, your days of seclusion are at an end, and to-day you have again come forth.[1]

[1] On *Kwakuo*, i.e. Kwa-Wednesday and upon Thursday, Ta Kora's temple is closed and no one has access to it. These days are bad days for the god. The oath of Ta Kora is *kwakuo*.

I hold an egg in my hand and am giving it to you.
Life to the Chief of Tekiman.
Life to the people of Oboase.
Life to the Chief of Nkoranza.
Life to the Chief of Nsuta.
Life to the Chief of Juaben.
Life to the Ashanti nation.
Life to the white man, may he last as long as you, Ta Kora, have lasted in the rock.
Life to those who walk with him. Do not let my ears become closed, do not let my eyes become covered over; do not let me become impotent.
You, whom alone we call " Lord of the rock ", receive this egg and eat, and upon this sacred Friday may you stand behind us with a good standing.'

During all this speech the herald was continually breaking in with, *Tie! Tie! Kom! fwe! fwe!* (listen! listen! silence! behold! behold!).

Taking a second egg, the priest broke it in like manner and rubbed the yolk over the top of the shrine of Ati Akosua, saying as he did so:

'*Ati Akosua, nne Fofie gye kesua yi di.*
Wo Boase man nkwaso.
Tekiman 'hene nkwaso.
Oboroni nkwaso.
Nkrofo a o ne ye nam nkwaso, ma no nkye se die wo se Ta Kora akyere abomu: me nkwaso (*&c., &c.*).
Die ofua otuo nya nam nkum.'

'Ati Akosua, to-day is sacred Friday, receive this egg and eat.
Life for your people of Oboase.
Life for the Chief of Tekiman.
Life to the white man and to those who walk with him; may he last as long as your father, Ta Kora, has lasted in the cave.
Life to myself (&c., &c., and ending up), May he who holds a gun get meat to kill.'

The third shrine, that of Ta Kwesi (sometimes known as Kramo Kese), was treated in the same manner with the last egg, similar words being used.

A pot of palm wine was now brought forward and poured into a calabash, which was held by the chief priest. Into this he dipped the end of the cow-tail switch, already mentioned, the

edoa dokum, made of palm fibre, and sucking this he sprayed the wine it contained against the wall near by Ta Kora.

Another calabash was brought by the herald and held in front of the Ta Kora shrine, while the priest filled it from the calabash which he held, saying:

'*Obom' 'hene nsa ni o: nne Fofie: wo ko so, nne na wo firi: wa be gye nsa anom: wagyina m'akyin akyigyina pa. Tekiman 'hene nkwaso (&c., &c., and ending), Wo mma ne wo na' ko bata ma yenya sika mmera fie.*'

'Lord of within the rock, here is wine. To-day is sacred Friday, you have gone into seclusion, but to-day you have come forth. May you receive this wine and drink. May you stand behind me with a good standing. Life to the Chief of Tekiman (&c., &c.). When your children and grandchildren go to trade may they bring money home to the house.'

Wine was poured out in the same manner for the other two gods, asking for life for the various Ashanti divisions, and ending with:

'*Wo nno bi, ntan bi, nyina nkwaso.*'

'Life for all, you who do not love some and hate others.'[1]

After this the old priest walked across the room and poured some wine upon four of the blackened stools, saying as he did so

'*Mpanyimfo monge nsa nom.*'

'Elders receive your wine and drink.'

Then upon the fifth stool, saying:

'*Oba panyim gye nsa nom.*'

'Old woman, receive wine and drink.'

This completed the ordinary ceremony which it was the head priest's duty to perform every forty-third day.[2]

Any of the general public who had an offering to bring now came forward with it. One gave eggs, another a pot of wine, another a fowl. Wisirika, one of my party (who is the man on the log, *padua*, see Fig. 19), gave a pot of wine and some salt.

The fowl offered was received by the chief priest in both

[1] The chief priest told me that this god was never asked to hate any one or bring evil upon any one, the most he does is to omit his blessing.

[2] See Chap. IX.

hands from the donor. It was held close to the shrine of Ta Kora, and the following words spoken :

' *Obom' 'hene Ta Kora, wo nana Asumàsi na nne Fofie ofua ne nsam okoko ne nsa de re be fwe w'anim mu, osere wo nkwa, osere wo akwahosan, wa be gye adi na wagyina n'akyi akyigyina pa, oye biribiara nye yiye ; ne nkrofo nyina nkwa so.*'

' King of within the rock, Ta Kora, your grandchild, So-and-so, because to-day is sacred Friday, holds this fowl which is from his hands, and brings it that he may behold your face ; he begs you for life, he begs you for long-continuing health ; may you come and receive it and eat and stand behind him with a good standing, and whatever he does may it be well. Life to all his household.'

The priest then set the fowl upon the flat, smooth surface of the shrine. The fowl, which a second before had been struggling and frightened, stood perfectly still upon the shrine, making no attempt to fly or jump down. It began first of all to prune its feathers. I noted it was most intently watched by the priest. It stood still thus for about a minute, when the priest picked it up and again held it against the brass pan, saying :

' *Se wo nana aye wo biribiara oma wo de bem, be gye wa 'koko.*'

' If your grandchild has done anything against you, he begs your pardon. Come and accept his fowl.'

The fluttering, terrified hen was again transferred to the top of Ta Kora's shrine. Here again it stood quite still. Suddenly it sat down as if about to roost and at the same time gave a little peck at the surface upon which it sat. Immediately it was seized by the priest, and in a second its head was wrung off, the bleeding body held above the pan, and a little blood allowed to fall upon it, when the still fluttering body was cast over the heads of the people out into the yard. Here it was cut up and divided, I was told, among the children of the priest.

After this an offering of wine was brought. It was placed in the hands of the priest by the representative who had accompanied me from Tekiman. The priest was just about to address the god when he seemed to be seized with a fit. The calabash of wine fell from his hand to the floor. He staggered and fell against the altar, and was only saved from falling by those who

rushed forward and supported him. Held thus he leaned his head against the brass basin and seemed gradually to recover.

His place was immediately taken by another priest. A fresh calabash of wine was brought and poured out as already described before the gods and upon the stools.

There was so much noise after the old priest's seizure that I could not hear what was said as this libation was made, but was told it was the same as on the former occasion.

Another fowl was sacrificed as before, behaving in the same way. Should a fowl not act thus, it is handed back to the donor, ' the god having refused it '.

Next the wine was passed round, that in the big calabash, which had been offered to the gods, was drunk only by the herald and those who were observers of the god's taboos.

Two staves, with silver tops, belonging to the *akyeame* (' linguists ') were now brought and rested upon the altar and against the shrine of Ta Kora, and a string of beads, called *akomen*, were hung upon it.

After a few minutes these were removed and Ta Kora was covered over with a native-woven cloth, upon one corner of which was sewn a small cross of cowrie shells.

A large striped cloth was now thrown over all and the two staves and the beads replaced on the altar.

While all this had been going on, two women *akomfo*—not priestesses of Ta Kora—were dancing in the court-yard to the accompaniment of drums and songs. Every now and then they would run up the steps into the room where we all were, bend down upon one knee, and emit what sounded just like yelping sounds, but which was really *agya! agya!* father! father! They were heavily powdered with the usual clay. Every one now left the temple and went into the yard to watch the dancing. ' The gods were disporting and enjoying themselves,' I was told.

This completed the ceremony in the pantheon. About an hour later we all set out for ' the King's rock ', an account of which will be given in the next chapter.

XVII

RELIGION

The God Tano (continued).

A Visit to his Rock.

About an hour after the events related in the previous chapter, we all set out from the village to go to the natural shrine of the ' King from within the rock '.

The head priest and I were each escorted under enormous umbrellas. We were closely attended by a very old lady with snow-white hair—the mother of the old chief priest—who carried a cow-tail switch, with which, somewhat to my embarrassment, she would insist on gently stroking my head, face, and shoulders, alternately transferring her attentions to her son, the chief priest. Among others in the cavalcade who came with us were the two priestesses—in powdered white clay—who had been dancing in the yard of the temple. We were accompanied also by the spokesman (*okyeame*), several drummers, and a crowd of about fifty others, all men.

On the outskirts of the town, on the left of the narrow path, stood one of the conical-roofed huts, which is the temple of the god Ntoa, a modern adaptation of which, built with shingles and cement, may be seen at Nkoranza.—An interesting example of the evolution of the modern from the ancient.—(See Figs. 80 and 81.)

The two priestesses darted aside to this temple and curtsied very low before the entrance, at the same time sprinkling before it some white powdered clay. A few minutes later these very active ladies again dashed off, and again bent the knee and sprinkled some clay upon the ground. When I went to the spot I found it was at the cross-roads, one leading to the cave, and the other to the source of the Tano River, and I recalled the words of the priest who had said : ' You, the cross-roads leading to whose dwelling is a fearful place.'

The narrow path we followed ran parallel to another and

Fig. 80. Temple to Ntoa near Tano Oboase

Fig. 81. A modern adaptation of a similar temple at Nkoranza

overgrown path leading, I was told, from the old village of Tano Oboase, the site of which was only a short distance from the present town. It was down this now unused path that the great Ashanti King, Bonsu Panyim (*c.* 1800), had passed when he went to consult the great Tano before his campaign against the Gyaman, the campaign which ended in the defeat and death of the great Adinkira. This event, it will be recollected, had been already alluded to by the god in his speech made to me through the priest.

As we followed the path, there gradually became visible on our right, over the tops of the trees, a long range of sandstone rocks, upon which the path was gradually converging. They rose from 100 to 300 feet in height, in turrets, domes, and castles, and looked at first sight, and from the distance, as if they were the handiwork of man and not of nature. Presently we came to another cross-road leading directly to these cliffs. Here the whole party halted. Our umbrellas were closed, the drums became silent, the old woman, with hair like cotton-wool, became more active than ever with her cow-tail and nearly smothered me with it.

Most of the party halted here, while the old priest, I and a few others went forward to the rocks. The two priestesses ran ahead, and I saw them curtsying among the boulders at the spot that, I was told later, was Ame Yao's cave, where that king used to sit in contemplation (see Fig. 79).

Following the high-priest, we came up to the base of the rocks, high up on the face of which were perched two men (see Fig. 82). These men barred our way, and would not let any one pass until they had been paid a *domma*, i. e. the equivalent of that weight in gold dust.

The sum having been paid, we were permitted to climb the face of the cliff, pulling ourselves up by roots and grass and creepers, a somewhat difficult task for me as I was carrying a valuable camera. On reaching the ledge upon which those men stood, a low archway, which the priest said was called *opono akyi* (lit. the back door), was visible, and one by one we proceeded to crawl on our stomachs through this and along a low tunnel, called *ntwonom* (which simply means an entrance under a doorway). This gradually opened out into a large cave, which

again, on the side opposite to which we had entered, came out into the open. Beyond the mouth of the cave was a large boulder, upon which was piled a small heap of stones, on the top of which were the shells of two eggs (see Fig. 85). This boulder is known as *bokoro* (the one stone), and also as 'the king's stool'. The priest told me these stones were used for placing under and propping up Ta Kora, when his shrine was brought here and set upon the rock. On the right of this boulder (facing the cave) was another but smaller rock, which I was told was a shrine of Amoa, to whom the reader was introduced at Tekiman, during the *Apo* ceremony. Just outside the cave rose a great wall of rock about 60 feet high, upon which the high-priest was presently to throw an egg. This rock 'is the eating place of all the gods in Ashanti when they come to this place'. The cave itself is known as *ahem fie* (lit. the king's home). Inside this cave were to be seen fragments of pottery lying half-buried. 'These have been here since Odomankoma (the Creator) made things,' said the old priest.

The priest pointed out the spot where Bonsu Panyim, the Ashanti King, had stood more than a hundred years ago. No white man had ever been within the cave, said the old priest. One Governor (Sir Hugh Clifford?) had been outside it, and few of the Ashanti themselves had ever been permitted within. He said that when Bonsu Panyim had stood here to consult the god about his campaign against Adinkira, that the god (i.e. the priest carrying the god) had turned his back upon him because he, Bonsu Panyim, was a ninth child, and hence 'hateful' to the god. Standing thus, he had told the king that he would win his campaign and slay his enemy, but that forty days (forty-two?) later he would die. The priest said that up to that date Ta Kora generally resided in these rocks, and that it was only after the war against Gyaman that a shrine was made for him in a brass pan and that a temple had been built. 'Ta Kora even now only comes into the shrine (the pan) when called upon to do so.' 'Tano is as the wind,' said the old priest. Only some half-dozen men had been permitted to enter the cave. The priestesses remained below. The ceremony now began. Every one was stripped to the waist as a token of respect. The chief priest, taking an egg in his

hand, and standing beside the little cairn of stones, now spoke as follows :

' *Obom' 'hene, kantamanto, nne Fofie kese : me nsam kesua ni. Me sre wo nkwa, me sre wo ahooden, me sre wo akwahosan, wo mma ne wo na' nkwaso, Oboroni nkwaso. Tekiman 'hene nkwaso, Asante 'man nkwaso. Ye sre wo animonyan ne ahooden. Wa gyina akyiri akyigyina pa, ye ye biribiara ma nye yiye.*'

' King from within the rock, who, when he swears does not break his oath, to-day is the great sacred Friday ; here is an egg from my hands. I beg you for life, I beg you for strength, I beg you for continuing health ; life for your children and grandchildren, life for the chief of Tekiman, life for the Ashanti nation, life for the white man ; we beg you for favour and strength. May you stand behind us with a good standing. Whatever we do may it be well.'

He then took the egg, allowing white and yolk to fall upon the cairn, and placing the empty shell upon the top of one of the stones.

He then stepped a few paces out of the cave, and facing the wall of rocks—' the feeding place of the gods '—said

' *Sasama Ntoa, abosom nuasa a mo re ba be didi, nne Fofie monye kesua yi ni yanom mo me gye o.*'

' Sasama Ntoa and innumerable gods (lit. thirty gods), who are about to come and partake, to-day is sacred Friday, receive (this) egg and eat, come all of you and accept it.'

Saying so, he cast the egg against the side of the wall of rock.

Next he broke an egg against the small rock, Amoa, saying :

' *Amoa, me de kesua abere wo 'se, wonso wo die ni.*'

' Amoa, I have taken an egg and given it to your father, here is yours also.'

A palm-wine offering was next given, being poured on the cairn, with the words

' *Ta Kora me de kesua abere wo, gye nsa nom.*'

' Ta Kora, I have brought an egg and given to you, here is wine.'

He also threw some wine towards the big wall of rock, saying :

' *Yanom ma ma mo 'se nsa, monso mo die ni.*'

' All of you, I have given your father wine, this also is yours.'

He then poured a little upon Amoa, saying

' *Amoa, wanso wo puo ni.*'

' You also, Amoa, here are the dregs for you.'

A fowl was now handed to the priest, who, standing beside the pile of stones, said :

' *Obom' 'hene, Oboroni se oreba a be ma wo akye, abe fwe bere wo te, ye sere wo nkwa, ye sere wo ahooden ye nsam akoko ni.*'

' King of within the rock, the white man says he comes to give you a morning greeting and to behold where is your dwelling-place. We pray you for life, we pray you for health, here is a fowl from our hand.'

He then cut off the head of the fowl, and held the bleeding bird over the cairn so that the blood fell upon it. The headless body was then cast upon the floor of the cave, and every one leaned forward to watch its convulsive movements. After fluttering about, it lay still upon its back, feet up, a good omen, I was told, showing that the god had accepted it.[1] The fowl was now picked up and laid upon the rock, where it was carefully dissected. The legs, head, wing tips, and intestines were placed upon the Amoa stone, the rest on the Bokoro rock. The kidneys of the sacrifice were very carefully examined ; one was found to be white and the other black and white—not a wholly satisfactory omen, the old priest said ; both should have been white. He naïvely accounted for this by suggesting as the reason that I had not given any offering in the temple that morning. I took several photographs of this remarkable spot ; the light was of course very poor (see Figs. 84 and 85).

We now returned by the way we had come, and climbing down the face of the rock once again reached the ground, where the priestesses and others were awaiting us ; we immediately went along to see the cave upon ' the ground floor '. This is shown in Fig. 84. The spot near the two fragments of pottery

[1] Had it lain upon its side or stomach it would have been a bad omen.

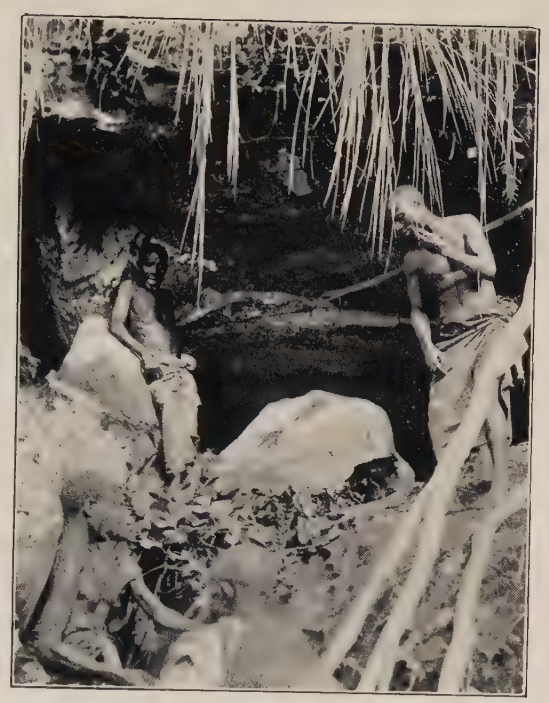


Fig. 82. We came to the base of the rocks

Fig. 83. Bosomtwe rocks

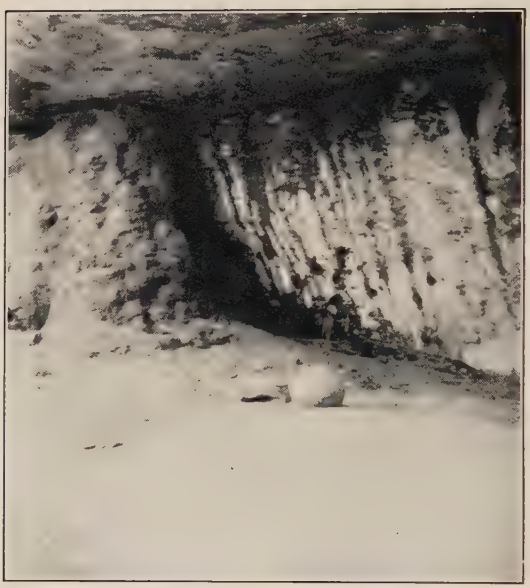


FIG. 84. The interior of Ame Yao's cave

FIG. 85. Bokoro, the king's seat

is known as *Ame Yao anim'* (lit. before the face of Ame Yao), from the tradition that it was here that this half-mythical first King of the Brong used to sit in contemplation when he came here to consult the god. In this cave there is a most interesting rock or boulder, every surface of which bears boat-shaped grooves exactly like those seen on many of the granite outcrops in Ashanti, which I believe to have been caused by the grinding of neolithic celts.[1] Another flat slab of rock, commanding a view to the approach to the cave, was worn as smooth as a marble slab. I think its surface must have been polished, possibly by having been used as a couch, with a skin laid upon it.

These caves are regarded as so sacred that I did not ask permission to dig in them, much as I should have liked to do so. I record their geographical position, and perhaps in some future generation it will be possible to conduct excavations.

We now rejoined the main body of our party, who had halted with the drums and umbrellas at the cross-roads, and all returned to the village.

On the following day I was taken to the source of the Tano and to the Bosomtwe Rock, and an account of these will be given in the next chapter. Before leaving the subject of the caves, however, I may say that a few days later I received permission to explore this neighbourhood. No one would accompany me. The priest said any one who climbed to the top of the rocks would surely die, and that no Ashanti had ever been or would ever go there. I could not persuade a single Ashanti, even my own men, who would generally have gone with me anywhere, to accompany me, and all implored me not to go. Eventually my Police Orderly, Braima Fulani, a stout and most excellent fellow of the type found in that magnificent body of men, the Gold Coast Regiment, W.A.F.F., said he would go with me.[2]

By taking off my boots and socks I was able to climb up the smooth, steep-sloping surface of the great rocks, and by joining our belts and the orderly's cummerbund, he was able to pull me up to the places to which he had mounted with the agility

[1] See Chap. XXVI.

[2] Braima Fulani died very suddenly some weeks later from cerebral embolism. A few days before his death, my own life was only saved by an operation.

of a cat. Progressing thus we worked our way up towards the topmost peak. On our arrival there a wonderful sight presented itself, for on our looking down over the edge of the precipitous rocks we saw a great circular arena, about 150 feet below, which was covered with short green grass, shrubs, and flowers. Beside us, on the surrounding rocks and forming a complete semi-circle, sat great dog-faced baboons with their wives and children, very inquisitive but not frightened by our presence. We descended from the peak with great difficulty, and I was not sorry to find myself back on firm ground, for had we lost our footing on the slippery rocks overlooking the arena and fallen, we should have been shut in by the surrounding rocks too steep to climb; I very much doubt if the local inhabitants would have dared to come and search for us.

On our way back, by a totally different route, which showed that there was no necessity to enter the cave by the arduous and difficult 'back door' entrance, we suddenly came upon the little cairn of stones, the egg-shells, and the sacrifice almost eaten by ants. The whole village was greatly relieved at our return, and the old priest's first inquiry was about the baboons. He anxiously inquired whether I had shot at them. It was impossible to take my camera on this expedition, but I hope some day, when better equipped with a rope, &c., to be able to secure photographs of this extraordinary place.

XVIII

RELIGION

The God Tano (continued).

The Ceremony at the Source of the River.

The Tano River, which flows into the sea at the Tano lagoon near Half Assini, rises about a quarter of a mile from the rocks and caves which have just been described, and south-east of the little village of Tano Oboase. The day following the ceremonies which I have just described, the old priest, in accordance with the expressed wish of his god, took me to this spot. Branching off at the cross-roads, where the priestesses on the preceding day had curtsied and sprinkled white powdered clay, we followed the path till it passed near a great rock, known as Bosomtwe *bo*, i. e. the Bosomtwe Rock, forming part of the sandstone range already mentioned (see Fig. 85). Now Bosomtwe is the name of the lake about eighteen miles south-east of Coomassie, which has been fully described in Chapter II in this volume. We have seen that the water is, like the Tano and other rivers, considered ' a son of the Supreme Being '. There is a curious legend to the effect that Lake Bosomtwe did not always lie in its present locality but was situated near the Bosomtwe Rock in Northern Ashanti. I was taken and shown a large natural depression, now perfectly dry and covered with trees and vegetation, which the local people say was in ancient times the site of this lake, but owing to its not being able to get on with ' his brother ' Tano it departed from here and went and made its home where it is now found.

When we came to the foot of the rocks, the old priest, taking an egg in his hand, spoke as follows:

' *Kwesi Bosomtwe, wadaworoma ; wo 'se ne Ta Kora, sunsum kese a owo babi, ono na ye fre no esono. Na Oboroni abe fwe ne anim mu, na ose ore be sen akofwe asuom*', *na wo Bosomtwe nso*

ontumi nsan woho nko, na me nso me ntumi mfa m'ani hunu me fwe wo. Me fua me nsam kesua de re ma wo. Me sre wo nkyere ; me sre wo nkwa : me sre wo akwahosan ; gye o !'

'Bosomtwe, (whose day of service is a Sunday), by your favour ; your father is Ta Kora, that great spirit which is everywhere, it is he we call elephant. The white man has come and looked upon his face, and he tells you he is passing to go and look upon the water (the Tano), but you, Bosomtwe, he cannot pass by on his way (ungreeted), and I also cannot come and look upon you with my eyes alone, so I hold in my hand an egg to give you. I beg of you long life ; I beg of you health ; I beg of you continuing strength (and throwing the egg against the rock) ; receive !'

Next he presented an egg from my party with the words :

'Bosomtwe Oboroni se ore be sen ako Tano, na oduru ha yi ontumi nsan woho reko. Okoo asuo ho, omaa Bosomtwe akoko fufuo, na nka ore pe akoko de abre wo, na wanya bi, na ne nsam kesua mienu ne nsa ode bere wo. Yen a o ne ye nam, nkwaso mma ye nim nnu ase ; gye o !'

'Bosomtwe, the white man is passing, going to Tano, and having reached this spot he cannot pass you by. (Once) he went there to "the lake" and gave Bosomtwe a white fowl, and he was about to seek a fowl for you but did not get one. But here are two eggs and wine from his hands, which he brings you. Life to those who walk with him and do not let their eyes ever drop in shame (and throwing the egg against the rock) ; receive !'

Next the priest filled his mouth with palm wine and spraying it out against the rocks, said :

'Ye de nkesua mienu ama wo, ye nsam nsa 'so ni, adidi ne anom.'

'We have given you two eggs, here also is wine from our hands, food and drink, we pray you for health, we pray you for life !'

The priest told me that on this spot used to be sacrificed the cow, sent annually by the King of Ashanti, to ensure good fishing in Lake Bosomtwe, a hundred miles away. He also told me how only three years ago the chief of Kokofu (near Coomassie) had sent four sheep to appease the lake spirit because

Fig. 86. The source of the mighty Tano river

Fig. 87. The white man says he has come to give you a morning greeting

Fig. 88. An altar . . . on the Tano near Kuntunso

of the violation of some of its taboos, namely, the use by certain persons of iron hooks and cast nets (see Chapter II).

We now passed down the path to the source of the river. This spot is variously known as *Obo tirim* (at the head of the rock), *Tano atifi* (at the head of the Tano), and *Tanom'* (in the Tano). As we drew near the spot the priest shouted out:

'*Tano Kwampere me re ba o, mma me fu wo mu.*'

'Tano Kwampere, I am coming, do not let me take you unawares.'

The path now led abruptly down to the stream, a little trickle of clear water rising from a spring beneath a bank (see Fig. 86). The priest stooped down, and taking some water in his hollow palm drew it into his mouth, immediately spraying it out, and saying:

'*Me hyira mano; me pe nkwa, pe ahooden.*'

'I invoke a blessing upon my mouth, I seek life and strength.'

All who were present did the same, and also bathed their faces and hands. The priest took an egg and, squatting down said:

'*Oboroni se obe ma wo akye, na me nso me ntumi mfa ani hunu me fwe wo me nsam' kesua ni. Me sre wo nkwa,*' &c.

'The white man says he is come to give you a morning greeting, and as for me I cannot behold you with an empty eye, here is an egg from my hand. I beg you for life,' &c. (Fig. 87).

He then placed the egg, without breaking it, in the water, and gave another egg from our party. Next he gave wine, taking some in his mouth and spraying it out, saying:

'*Gye nsa nom, ye de nkesua mienu abere wo, adidi ne anom, ye sre nkwa,*' &c.

'Receive the wine and drink, we have given you two eggs. food and drink. We pray you for life,' &c.

He then poured a little of the wine into the water, and what was left was handed round and all sipped a little. My companions from Southern Ashanti now filled bottles which they

had brought with them and took some of the white clay from the stream. Then all rose up to go. The white-haired old priest asked us all to pass on while he remained behind. He joined us a few minutes later. I asked him why he had remained behind, and he replied that it was that he might be able to protect us who passed on in front. 'My *sunsum* (spirit) is strong,' he said. 'If one of you had followed last, he might have met something to endanger him.'

XIX

RELIGION

The God Tano (continued).

Some of his 'Sons'.

In this chapter it is proposed to examine rites witnessed in connexion with the cult of Tano, as exemplified in the worship of some of his minor emanations, i. e. 'sons of Tano'.

We have been introduced to Ta Kora literally at his fountain head, i. e. the source of the great river, in his rock, and at his man-made and man-consecrated shrine. We have already heard of many of 'his children' and 'his grandchildren'. Their number is indeed legion and there seems no limit set upon them, provided priests be found to interpret and intercept his spirit. We not only find offshoots of Tano in villages remote from that water, but every ford and important crossing of the river seems to possess a local emanation of his spirit.

The traveller who journeys in North-Western Ashanti and has occasion to cross the Tano River will almost certainly see upon one or other bank a rough altar made of sticks,[1] and upon this a shrine, with the usual brass pan or maybe just a stone taken from the bed of the river near by. An example of each may be seen in Figs. 88–9.

Fig. 88 stands near the crossing at Kuntunso. The shrine consists in this case simply of a stone from the bed of the stream. Upon it were the remains of an offering of *eto* (mashed yams). The altar upon which the stone rested is called *apa* (a rack), and the little clearing all round is called *asonyeso* (a place of worship). In this photograph may be seen through the trees my party about to cross the ford, and a flock of sheep being driven down to Coomassie by some Hausa traders. The second *apa*, shown in Fig. 89, is that at the ford near the village of

[1] Nearly always branches of the tree called *Akanye* which take root and sprout and thus do not rot away so readily.

Tanosu. The shrine in this case is the customary brass pan. The second *apa* near to it contains a broken bottle, and this one is for the *samanfo* (spirit ancestors). The shrine is that of Asubonten, lit. the river street, i. e. ford, and the spirit that at times is called to enter this shrine is the part of the spirit of Tano at this ford. This god is, I am informed by Kofi Kra, the chief of Tanosu, he father of the god Ati Akosua, to whose priestess we were introduced at the *Apo* ceremony at Tekiman, and the son of Ta Kora.

On Sunday, the 22nd April 1922, I was present at the following ceremony in connexion with this god. Just beforehand the chief told me that Asubonten was that part of the spirit of Tano whose home was at the ford; the brass pan contained something from the bed of the river, taken from this ford. The first part of the ceremony consisted of the sacrifice of a very small chicken—a few days old. Its head was simply wrung off by one of the *tanokwa*, meaning slaves of Tano, who said, *Gye akoko yi di*, 'Receive this fowl and eat.'

A few drops of blood were allowed to fall on the pan and the chicken was cast into the river, when it was immediately pounced upon by the fish. This chicken was an offering from some one, from whom I do not know. I asked why such a small chicken had been given, and was told that the god which the donor had consulted had possibly said that Asubonten wanted a fowl so many days old. The chief now handed a white cock to one of the *tanokwa* and then addressed the god as follows

'*Nne Fokwesi na Ati Akosua wa hye fa na nnawotwe ne nne, na me re yi ano, na me kura me nsa mu akoko yi de re bere wo. Me nkwaso, Tanosu man nkwaso, Yao Kramo nkwaso. Mma mo nnya Aban amane. Gyina m'akyi akyigyina pa. Kuro yi nkwa so.*'

'To-day is a sacred Sunday and it is eight days since Ati Akosua celebrated his (her ?) festival, and to-day we are making it complete, and I hold this fowl, (a gift) from my hand, to bring you. Life to me, life to the people of Tanosu, life to Yao Kramo (chief of Tekiman). Do not let us get into trouble with the Castle (i. e. the Government). Stand behind me with a good standing. Life to the people of this town.'

The man holding the cock now cut its head off and allowed

the blood to drip into the pan[1] (see Fig. 90). The fowl was cut up, and as soon as this was done the *tanokwa*, holding the pieces in his hand, went to the bank of the river and called out in a loud voice :

'*Asubonten bra, akaafona be gye akoko di.*'

'Come, Asubonten, come sword-bearers, receive a fowl and eat.'

He threw the pieces of fowl into the river, where they were at once seized upon by the fish. The river was in flood and it was not possible to photograph the fish which, I was informed, when the stream was clear and low, put their heads out of the water and were fed by hand.

Next wine was poured upon the shrine, with the words :

'*Asubonten gye nsa nom, odekuru se ne nsa ni. Nne Fokwesi ode akoko abere wo, nsa a ode gu akyiri ni. Mma asem bone biara mma 'kuro yi mu.*'

'Asubonten, receive the wine and drink. The owner of the town says it is wine from his hands. To-day is sacred Sunday, he has brought you a fowl and this is wine which he has poured after. Do not let any bad matter come upon this town.'

The wine that remained was passed round among all present. No offering was made on this occasion to the *samanfo* (spirits of ancestors).

As I was passing the spot a few hours later on my way to another village, I saw an *okomfo* (priest) sitting upon the *apa* beside the shrine. He was covered with white powdered clay and heavily adorned with *suman* (fetishes), and was attended upon by a woman carrying a basin containing powdered clay. He sat upon the logs beating his *odawuru* (gong) and singing the following song (see Fig. 91) :

My words reach far away, O Ame Yao.
My words reach peoples.
I who am the son of the god Ta Kese, King of Aban.
My words reach peoples.

[1] I remember once being told in South Ashanti that a big chief might not kill a fowl. It will be noted too in all sacrifices of sheep that the chief only pricks the throat, which is afterwards cut by some one else.

And again:

> Father, help me for I am miserable.
> Father Ta Kese (a god), help me for I am unhappy.
> Ati Akosua, help me for I am unhappy.

I went up and saluted him. He told me he was a priest from Akumadan. The beating of his gong (*odawuru*) helped him, he said, to hear the voice of the river and served to call up the spirit. The chief of Tanosu and several of the elders told me that the fish in this part of the river are known as *Tano mma* (children of Tano), and that in olden days any one catching or eating them would have been instantly killed. An Ashanti army, going to war, which crossed the Tano at this ford, would make a halt, and the captains would ask for a blessing and give offerings of sheep, fowls, and gold dust to the river. The priest would 'call the fish' and the general would explain to them the reason of the campaign. Some of the very large fish would come half out of the water and lie with their heads on the sand, and a brass pan would be pushed under their mouths, and into this they would vomit up sand and water, and this would then be sprinkled over the captains. When this water dried white it was a good omen. Some of the water would also be carried along with the army. The water from this part of the Tano is not used for cooking and must not be boiled. Should any shrine seem to lose its attraction for the spirit for which it was made, water from the Tano will be sprinkled upon it and its virtue recovered.

Tano water is also used for drinking, as an ordeal. Any one may drink it upon ordinary occasions, but will then say: 'My spirit So-and-so (meaning his or her *ntoro*), I invoke a blessing upon my mouth, stand behind me with a good standing.' No dead body is allowed to cross at the ford, but is taken higher up the river, and even before it is allowed to cross there the sacrifice of a sheep has to be made.

Any woman who has crossed the river to go to her farm or to visit, and begins her 'period', must not re-cross the ford before she is better, and she will spend a week in some other village. Widows, the eighth day after the death of their husbands, are sprinkled with Tano water.

XX

RELIGION

The Afahye *Ceremony.*

The *Afahye* ceremony, part of which I witnessed at Ejura, may be defined as an annual custom held in connexion with the eating of the first fruits of each crop, in this case yams. The word *afa* is given in Christaller's *Dictionary* as meaning festival, and *hye* is to fix or appoint a day, so that the whole word may be translated by ' an appointed festival '.

The ceremony to be described began, as far as I know, on Thursday, the 27th October 1921, and the new year at Ejura commenced on Monday, the 31st October.[1]

The chief local god is Konkroma (' a child of Tano ').

I had administered the Ejura district before the war. The old, now almost blind, chief, Kojo Brenya, was a friend of mine, as was also the chief priestess of Konkroma. The Ejura people occupy the Brong country at its southernmost point.

The first part of the ceremony, which I did not myself witness, and for an account of which I am indebted to the chief and the head priestess, really falls under the heading ' the cult of ancestors ', for this ceremony has two distinct aspects, in connexion with

(*a*) The spirits of ancestors.

(*b*) The gods.

The first part of the ceremony, I was informed, was as follows :

On Thursday, the 27th October (1921), the chief's ' white ' stools and his chair (*asipim*) were taken out into the court-yard of the ' palace ' and thoroughly scrubbed with *cold* water (i. e. water which had not been boiled) and sand, with a sponge made of pine-apple fibre. That same day the walls and floors of the stool-house and of the chief's house were replastered, the

[1] Bowdich in his *Mission from Cape Coast Castle to Ashanti*, p. 230, says, writing from Coomassie, that the year began on the 1st October. I am inclined to think that the date varies in different localities according to the particular god served.

walls with *hyire*, white clay, the floor with *ntwuma*, red clay. The house and stool-house of the Queen Mother were similarly treated. All this was done, I was told, without the accompaniment of songs and music such as were indulged in when 'the house of the gods' was cleaned later. On Friday, the 28th, the chief rose betimes, bathed, and, accompanied by 'linguist', herald, stool-carriers, &c., went to the stool-house (of the blackened stools), where, pouring some wine upon the stools, he said:

'*Nananom e, mo me gye nsa nom, na afe ano ahyia na nne na me de mo ko asuo mu ako bo mo asu.*'

'Grandsires, come and receive wine and drink, for to-day the edges of the years have met (i.e. the new and the old), and to-day I am taking you to the stream to sprinkle you with water.'[1]

Each stool (I do not know how many there were) was then carried upon the nape of the neck of its carrier and taken to the river. That of the first king was carried under an umbrella. When the river was reached, water was drawn in a brass pan and sprinkled upon each stool with a cow-tail switch—while still supported on its bearer's neck—the 'linguist' saying all the time as he did so

'*Ye bo mo asu o, ye bo mo asu o!*'

'We sprinkle you with water, we sprinkle you with water!'[1]

Water was sprinkled in like manner on the chief, his sons, and on those of the chief's clan or blood. After this sprinkling all returned to the village and the blackened stools were replaced in the stool-house. A sheep was now brought and killed with the formalities already described in the *Adae* ceremonies, the words varying slightly and being as follows:

'*Me nkwaso, Mampon 'hene nkwaso, mmawofo nkwaso, abomofo nkwaso, na ma wontumi nkum nam, abatafo nkwaso, akuafo nkwaso, mmarima yenwo mma, mma yare bone mma, ye re ma wo bayere foforo ama wodi.*'

'Life to me; life to the chief of Mampon; life to the bearers

[1] The Queen Mother's stools under her charge were on this occasion taken part of the way to the river when water was carried back to them and sprinkled upon them.

FIG. 89 The platform or altar in the background has set upon it the shrine of Asubonten

FIG. 90. The sacrifice of a white fowl to Asubonten

Fig. 91. The priest . . . singing 'Father, I am miserable'

of children; life to hunters, may they be able to kill meat; may the men beget children; do not let any bad sickness come; we are giving you new yams that you may eat.'

Pieces of the sacrifice were placed on the stools along with new yams sliced and boiled. The remainder of the yams were sent to the chief's house, and he and certain other persons were now permitted to eat them for the first time that season.

The following list was given me of those who were not allowed to taste the new season's crops previous to this ceremony:

(*a*) The *samanfo* (ancestral spirits).
(*b*) The Queen Mother.
(*c*) The chief.
(*d*) Stool-carriers.
(*e*) The adult sons and daughters of the chief.
(*f*) Adults of the chief's clan.
(*g*) The *akraguareni* (chief's soul-washers).
(*h*) The chief's head wife (whose duty it is to cook for the *samanfo*, spirits).

Children and people other than these mentioned were not restricted at any time. Should any in the above list eat yams before the time prescribed, the crops, it is thought, would not be fruitful.[1]

The ceremony so far, it will have been noted, has reference to ancestral spirits, and is not, in its object and practice, unlike the Baya ceremony described in Chapter XII. The next half of the ceremony was more concerned with the gods than with disembodied human spirits. This part of the ceremony I witnessed in person. I arrived at Ejura on Saturday, the 29th October (1921). Nothing, so far as I am aware, took place on that date. On the following day the pantheon where the shrine of Konkroma and those of the other lesser gods were kept, and the rest of the rooms in its compound, were washed down with fresh whitewash and the floors replastered. This work was done entirely by women to the accompaniment of songs and rattles

[1] My old Ashanti friend, the late Kakari, once told me that in the old days every trade and profession held its *afahye*: the hunter for his guns; the farmer for his agricultural implements; the blacksmith for his tools; the trader for his *apakon* (basket which he carried for his goods); drum makers for their tools, &c., &c., in each case it being a kind of annual purification.

(*ntorowa*). The whitewash was mixed by some very old women (see Figs. 92 and 93), and the whole of the work was superintended by the chief priestess, who with some of her children are seen in Figs. 94 and 95. The following is a translation of two of the songs that were sung while the work was in progress. Lack of space prevents me giving these and others, to be noted later, in the original.[1]

Little helpers to call the spirit, let them come ;
Little spirits, if they have gone to eat, let them come.
They who are the grandchildren of the priest Anotchi.[2]

I have water, I have water.
I come from the Tano river.
Little spirits from Lake Bosomtwe, I have water,
Otwedodo, son of Bosomtwe, I have water,
I come from the Tano river.
I am he who was created son of God.

Besides Konkroma, the chief of the gods at Ejura, the following gods were attending the ceremony. All were ' sons ' of the great Tano already described :

Ta Kwame.
Ta Konkroma Kuma.
Ta Asubonten (a son of the Asubonten whose rites have already been described).
Ta Konkroma Kuma II.
Ta Kojo.
Ta Bonia.
Ta Kwesi.
Ta Amoa.

After the plastering of the pantheon, the priestess told me that nothing more would happen till about 11 p.m. the same night.

I returned to the town at the time appointed and sat down at the foot of a great baobab tree just at the entrance of the court-yard of the Konkroma temple. Not a soul was about and the whole of the village seemed asleep. I had the usual West African hurricane lamp beside me, and as I sat a man came

[1] These songs were later sung into a phonograph.
[2] Anotchi was the famous priest who lived in the reign of Osai Tutu and who by his magical powers is said to have brought the Golden Stool down from the skies. See Chap. XXIII.

Fig. 92. The whitewash was mixed by some very old women

Fig. 93. The work was done by women to the accompaniment of songs and rattles

Fig. 94. The work was superintended by the chief priestess

Fig. 95. The chief priestess walking beside another priestess who is carrying a shrine

out of the shadows, peered into my face, and next moment had thrown both his arms round my neck, saying, '*Oboroni obofo*', 'the European hunter'. It was Opoku, an old Ashanti hunter who had tracked elephants for me long before the war, and with whom I had often lain down in the forest when nightfall had overtaken us. We sat and talked about the old days and I made him tell me all about *sasammoa*, i. e. animals which are spiritually, not physically, dangerous, about which I shall have something to say in another volume.

About midnight the drums began to 'talk' in fitful bursts, and the *akomnyumtufo* (singers to call up the spirits) assembled, formed a half-circle in the court-yard of the temple, and began to sing. These are the songs I took down. Again space forbids me giving the Ashanti in every case.

O death, you have done me an evil turn,
To-morrow is the *Adae*, (the Brong Wednesday *Adae*).

Let us sing sweetly that father (the god) may come.
He destroys towns.
When great events are happening, do not be lying down.
Your mischievous enemy is abroad.
When great events are happening, O warrior, O hunter, do not be lying down.

Mother of a people, I have been a porcupine,
Ram that has horns,
I have been a porcupine, Agyiman.

I sleep at the cross-roads.
It is as a leopard that I walk.

The god, Twumpuduo, has come.
Tano Twumpuduo has come.

During an interval I gave the drummers two shillings, whereupon they drummed:

'*Obarima katekyi a neho bon atoduru me da wo ase.*'

'Brave man whose skin smells of gunpowder, I thank you.'

The singers continued:

Banie (a god), we call you.
Come quickly.

The hunter has killed, and tears are very near his eyes, O Suadomo (a name for Tano).

Opoku, the hunter, turned to me and whispered, '*otromo*', meaning that the bongo was referred to. A hunter, when he has shot one of the *sasa boa* (animals with a powerful spirit), will burst into lamentations, as if he had just witnessed the death of some one he loved.

The entangling creepers lie upon you.
They lie upon you; are you going to remove them?

The talking drums now beat out:

Okatakyi ofua otuo ne afona be ko,
Ma wo ho meneso.
Okurotwiamansa wo sesia,
Sesia wo so biribiri,
Kurotwiamansa namtew bere bere,
Ohene namtew bere bere.

The hero holds a gun and a sword to fight.
Make yourself to arise.
The leopard is in the thicket.
The thicket shakes like anything.
Leopard, walk softly, softly.
O King, walk softly, softly.

And again:

Asuo atware kwan,
Okwan atware asuo yi;
Opanyin ne hwane?
Ye bo kwan ko to asuo yi?
Asuo yi firi tete.
Asuo yi firi Odomankoma.
Oboo adie.
Konkon Tano.
Birifia Tano.
Wo ko babi a, bra,
Na ye fwe wo kwan.

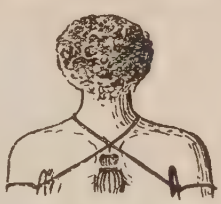
The stream crosses the path,
The path crosses the stream;
Which of them is the elder?
Did we not cut a path to go and meet this stream?
The stream had its origin long, long ago,
The stream had its origin in the Creator.

He created things,
Pure, pure Tano.
Birifia Tano.
If you have gone elsewhere, come,
And we shall seek a path for you.

Another song :

Orphans come.
Little mother, come.
Something I fear is coming upon me.

It was now about 4 a.m., the yard was packed with people sitting all round the circle of singers and in the open verandah rooms. Suddenly the head priestess of Konkroma burst from the temple and rushed down the steps in the centre of the yard. Greeting the assembled with *Me ma mo akye o*, 'I give you good morning,' she passed right through the crowd and out of the yard. The singing continued and in about five minutes she returned, accompanied by two girls. She wore a short white skirt, was naked down to the waist, and white with powdered clay. A band called *bibire*, made of some twisted fibre about the thickness of the little finger, was crossed over her back after passing round the neck, and fastened round the upper part of the arms. Where the strands crossed a *suman* (charm), known as *akyigyina*, lit. stand behind (me), was fastened.[1] When the priestess returned the second time she jumped into the ring, clapped her hands, and shouted, 'Hoo ! Let all evil sickness away and may a good year meet us once more.'



The drums rattle out :

Damirifa ! damirifa ! damirifa !
Ma woho meneso, be goro.

Alas ! alas ! alas ![2]
Make yourself to arise and come and play.

The priestess now began to dance that curious shuffling, stooping, mincing dance alternated with wild gyrations, so

[1] This idea of protection from something attacking one from behind—the invisible—is seen throughout all the ceremonies. Almost every prayer ends with 'stand behind me with a good standing'.

[2] The commiseration was, I was informed, for the spirits of those who had died since this ceremony was last performed, a year ago.

peculiar to West Africa. She was accompanied by rattles, drums, and singing of the songs already given. Her attendants constantly smothered her in white clay. As she danced, the spirit of Ta Amoa came upon her, and she spoke, in the Brong dialect, saying :

I have come from a very far country,
I have been living on cassava,
Now I see yams,
I thank you all.

She kept moving backwards and forwards into the temple, where Konkroma's and other shrines were kept, and in front of which had been placed bundles of yams. Between her wild dances she continued to walk round and round. Shortly before dawn broke she placed the back of her right hand upon the palm of her left and laid her hands against her cheek, whereupon the ' linguist ' said :

' King, we give you the path.'

The priestess then wheeled round and round and threw herself into the arms of four men, who carried her on their shoulders, up the steps and into the temple of the gods, where they laid her down, and every one went home.

It was now Monday morning, the 31st October (1921). Soon after midday the ceremony was continued. All the shrines of the gods were brought out, covered with their silk handkerchiefs. The most important were under umbrellas. Headed by an old woman carrying a pot of water and a man and woman carrying bundles of yams, escorted by six men carrying flintlock guns and by *fontomfrom* drums and a great concourse of people, all set off for the Asasebon River. A man walked beside the shrine of Konkroma and fanned it. The chief priestess was borne on a man's shoulders. Before reaching the waterside the drummers halted under a silk-cotton tree while the procession passed on. On arrival at the water the shrines were set down on the bank, each on its own stool. Water was drawn from the river in a brass basin, and this was mixed with the water brought in the pot (which would almost certainly be Tano water). The ' linguist ' of Konkroma, taking a cow-tail in his hand dipped it into the pan of water, and spoke as follows :

Fig. 96. The *Afahye* ceremony: the shrines of the gods returning from the water

Fig. 97. The escort to a shrine

Fig. 98. Escorted back to the village amid firing of guns

Fig. 99. The shrines, one by one, were taken into the stool house

' Amoa Kotoku die ye yo na ye yo, afe ano ahyia na ye re be bo wo asu, ma wo adi bayere. Adwira man' kwaso ; Adwira 'hene, Kojo Brenya, nkwaso ; Akuo Adai, Kwesi Fo, ohene Kojo Brenya ye de bayere, oguan, nsa, ne nkyene de abre wo se fa di bayere. Kojo Brenya, Akua Adai, Kofi Twinto, Ama Tiwa, Kwesi Fo, nkwaso. Mampon 'hene, Osai Bonsu, nkwaso, ne mpanyimfo nkwaso, asu bo o ! asu bo o ! '

' Amo Kotoku,[1] that which we have done we have done, the edge of the year has come round, and we are sprinkling you with water that you may eat yams. Life to the people of Adwira,[2] life to the chief of Adwira. Kojo Brenya, Akua Adai, Kwesi Fo, and chief Kojo Brenya have brought you yams, a sheep, wine, and salt, saying, partake of yams. Life for Kojo Brenya, Akua Adai, Kofi Twinto, Ama Tiwa, Kwesi Fo. Life to Osai Bonsu and to his elders ; the sprinkling of water ! the sprinkling of water ! '

As he said this he sprinkled each shrine with water. The shrines were then again raised upon the heads of their carriers, and were escorted back to the village amid firing of guns (see Fig. 98). The procession went at a snail's pace through the village, sometimes halting altogether. All the carriers of the shrines seemed under the influence of their particular spirit. They quivered and shook, and their eyes seemed fixed as if unseeing, and they swayed about (see Figs. 96–7). The chief, who had not gone to the water, met the procession in his hammock and fell in at the rear. The shrines, one by one, in turn were taken into the stool-house where the blackened stools were kept (see Fig. 99). Here, upon the floor, had been placed a piece of elephant hide, and upon this the priestess knelt and sprinkled white powdered clay, then rising embraced the Queen Mother. From the stool-house the shrines were taken back to the pantheon.

One priest now danced in the yard, where the previous night's ceremony had taken place. He had the shrine of his god upon his head as he danced, and later on he was joined by other priests and also the chief priestess. All were powdered with clay, and handfuls of this were thrown at them and into the air

[1] Amoa is perhaps the god of that name. Kotoku is sometimes used for the Akan people who were once under a king called Agyeman.

[2] Ejura as we call and spell it should really be Adwira. The town is called after a plant of that name.

as they danced. This dancing went on till about eight o'clock, when gifts from the chief, a sheep, yams, salt, *nsanu* (13*s.*), were handed to the ' linguist ' of Konkroma. These gifts were taken into the temple where the shrines of the gods stood uncovered. The sheep was held by some *Tanokwa* (servants of Tano) and Kwesi Fo, the ' linguist ', spoke as follows :

' *Afe ano chyia na wo man fua oguan de abre wo se fa di bayere ma akyiri nsi dwo. Ma afe nto yen bio ne manfo nyina na yensan mere wo foforo se die ye de re ma wo nne yi ara.*'

' The edge of the year has come round and your people hold a sheep for you, saying : partake of yams, and let what comes after, fall peacefully. Permit the year to come round once more and all people once again to bring you new yams just as we are giving you this very day.'

He then stabbed the sheep in the throat and blood was sprinkled on the top of the shrines in the usual manner and yams placed upon them. This completed the ceremony.

Some of the things ' hateful ' to the god Konkroma are curious. They include, among the other usual Tano avoidances :

(*a*) Whistling.
(*b*) Noise of sweeping.
(*c*) Dogs.
(*d*) Horses.
(*e*) Rats.

This completes the present survey of this subject—religion. A large mass of interesting material still remains to be examined, however, before we can arrive at a full understanding of Ashanti religious beliefs, but space forbids their inclusion in this volume.

Much light will be thrown upon their ideas of a future state by the examination of customs relating to birth, puberty, and death.

The whole subject of *suman*, charms, or lower graded spiritual power has yet to be examined ; the training of priests and priestesses and their special privileges and obligations have yet to be described. All these and many other questions will, I hope, be examined in a further work.

XXI

LAND TENURE AND ALIENATION

It is proposed in this chapter to examine the ancient Ashanti Customary Laws in relation to Real Property, from an anthropological, historical, and legal standpoint, and to attempt to indicate that in their application we have, I believe, a key to the successful introduction of a workable and satisfactory system of indirect rule, an ideal form of government for these people. This, I believe, cannot be satisfactorily introduced unless based upon such sound principles as would ensure to the stools of the paramount chiefs a steady and adequate revenue for the maintenance of their administration and of their dignity.

Before proceeding to a further examination of the subject, it may be as well to state the present-day legal position in our courts with regard to land in Ashanti. The ownership of the soil in Ashanti remains unaffected by our intervention. The conquest of Ashanti in the wars of 1874 and 1900 (for reasons which need not be here entered upon) did not result in vesting in the Crown any proprietary rights over land, which to-day, as prior to these events, belongs to the native rulers (as stool property), to the clans, or to individual household or family communities.[1]

We have therefore in Ashanti to-day approximately 24,000 square miles owned by the natives themselves, and held or alienated by them according to their ancient Customary Laws.

The broad general principles underlying the Ashanti system of land tenure were summarized in a report drawn up in July 1912 by Mr., later Sir, H. Conway Belfield, K.C.M.G.

If I seem in this chapter not to agree entirely with all the conclusions arrived at in that report, my criticisms are chiefly concerned with sins of omission, for that able document is

[1] The land within a radius of one mile and a half of the Fort in Coomassie, and such lands as have vested in the Government, in companies, or in individuals, by some specific process of law, are excepted from this rule.

on the whole, in its material parts, in accordance with the facts.

A perusal of this report by one interested in the anthropological, as opposed to the strictly legal, side of the question will, however, disclose the fact that in the mass of evidence collected, emanating from persons occupying such varied positions as Colonial Secretary, Chief, Provincial, and District Commissioners, Native Chiefs, West African Barristers, &c., &c., there is hardly an allusion throughout to the religious side of the subject. I use the word 'religious' in the Tylorian sense of the now famous 'minimum definition' of religion, as, *A Belief in Spiritual Beings*; and yet it is this religious aspect of the subject which I believe to lie at the basis of the whole structure of the unwritten land laws of the Ashanti, and I am even inclined to think that an understanding of this hitherto somewhat neglected side of the question may lead to a fuller conception, not only of the matter under review, but of any code of land laws. This religious element among a people such as the Ashanti can never properly be ignored in a critical survey of any of their customs, their laws, or even perhaps of their unpremeditated actions. In Ashanti the divorce of religion from any of these is wellnigh impossible, and it is hardly an exaggeration to say that any such estrangement would tend to result in an illegality.[1]

I propose therefore in the first instance to give a few of the facts under this heading which my researches have disclosed up to date.

The Ashanti regard the Sky and the Earth as their two great Deities. The Sky God is 'Nyame, whose rites have been already explained. The cult of the Earth Deity is less well known, perhaps because it is not quite so obvious. No temple or other object is reared to her, but her power is none the less universally acknowledged. The reason for this will be the more easily understood if it be realized that from the Earth, according to one of their best-known myths, sprang some of the aristocracy

[1] A good example of the dangers and misunderstandings arising from the mental attitude which either ignores or is ignorant of this principle, was seen in our treatment of the question of the Golden Stool in 1900, when we dealt with that symbol as if it were a purely temporal object, totally ignoring its deep religious and spiritual significance. See Chapter XXIII on the Golden Stool.

of the Ashanti clans, i. e. the Oyoko, from which the later Ashanti kings from Kwabia Amanfi down to Prempeh belonged, and the Aduana, with its seven sub-clans.[1]

The Ashanti name for the Earth is Asase Ya, Aberewa (Ya, Old Mother Earth), sometimes qualified by the phrase *Asase bo ne nsie*, i. e. Earth, the Creator of the Underworld. Ya is of course a female personal name, which, when applied to women, testifies to their natal day being a Thursday.

Thursday was the day set aside for the observance of 'Old Mother Earth', and even now the Ashanti farmer will not till or break the soil on this day, while only some thirty years ago infringement of this rule was punished by death.[2] It has been noted elsewhere (Chap. II, p. 52) that an offering is sometimes thrown upon the ground to the Earth Spirit.[3]

To this day, when the month comes round in which the farmer commences to till his land, his wife (or perhaps his sister) will cook *eto* (mashed plantain or yam). This, together with a fowl, is taken to the land where cultivation is to be commenced. The farmer stands upon the land and wrings off the neck of his offering, allowing the blood to drip upon the *eto* and upon the earth, and speaks as follows:

'*Nana Asumasi, wo na wo be do ha na wo de gya me. Asase Ya, wo na me re be do wo so, afi ano ahyia na me re be do, se me ye adwuma a, ma afrihyia pa nto me, mma sikan ntwa me, mma dua mmu mmo me, mma owo nka me.*'

'Grandfather So-and-so, you (once) came and hoed here and then you left (it) to me. You also Earth, Ya, on whose soil I am going to hoe, the yearly cycle has come round and I am going to cultivate; when I work let a fruitful year come upon me, do not let the knife cut me, do not let a tree break and fall upon me, do not let a snake bite me.'

The fowl is cut up and mixed with the *eto*. Portions are then thrown to the four points of the compass, some of the remains being placed in a leaf (preferably *adwin* or *summe*) and left

[1] This spot and the rites in connexion with it are described in Chap. X.

[2] Komfo Anotchi, the famous priest in the days of Osai Tutu, is said to have proclaimed the strict observance of this day of rest to Asase Ya.

[3] In this context it may be as well to note that when the Ashanti, before partaking of wine or spirits, pours a little on the ground from the cup, he does so, not for the Earth Goddess but for the shades of his ancestors.

on the spot where the man had stood when making the offering.

The sacredness of the Earth is also manifested indirectly in other ways, but the reason for the custom, to be mentioned now, is not yet clear to me. We have seen that the ' Golden Stool ' was never allowed to come in direct contact with the Earth—it must be placed upon an elephant's skin. The feet of the King of Ashanti were likewise never to touch the ground,[1] ' lest a great famine should come upon the nation '. Hence he always was followed about by a servant bearing a spare pair of sandals, lest the band across the instep of those he was wearing broke ; and when he slipped his sandals from his feet at the *Adae* ceremony, when propitiating his ancestral ghosts, he stood upon his sandals so that his feet should not touch the ground.

It is not, however, the Sky and the Earth deities who in Ashanti are held to be the prime factors in shaping and influencing the actions and destinies of mankind. These great unseen powers are generally too remote or perhaps too mighty to be concerned very intimately with the individual clan, much less with the individual member of that clan, and the predominant influences in the Ashanti religion are neither ' Saturday Sky-god ' nor ' Thursday Earth-goddess ', nor even the hundreds of gods (*abosom*), with which it is true the land is filled, but are the *samanfo*, the spirits of the departed forbears of the clan.

They are the real landowners, who, though long departed, still continue to take a lively interest in the land from which they had their origin or which they once owned. The Ashanti land laws of to-day appear but the logical outcome of a belief which, in the not very remote past, considered the living landowners as but holding as it were tenancies at will from the dead, and as being the trustees of the latter.

I believe it may be this religious aspect which largely accounts for the reluctance in the West African mind to the total alienation by sale of land to a foreigner, or even to one of their own race, a reluctance manifesting itself in the violent opposition offered to such a measure as the Crown Lands Bill of 1894, and

[1] The same avoidance is, I believe, enjoined for the *Dontenhene* (of Coomassie) and the Chief of the Silver Stool—the *Omanhene* of Mampon.

later the Forest Bill of 1911, by educated Africans, some of whom very possibly never knew or had long ago forgotten this 'religious' aspect of their own ancient laws of real property.

This belief in an Earth deity and in the continued interest of the spirit owners in land which they once owned when in the flesh, is not unknown among other African peoples to-day. Mr. Cardinal[1] has shown us how the *tindana* or 'owner of the land' has to be consulted even by the conquering race before they can deal with the land in any way. land which, according to our laws, we would suppose to be theirs by right of conquest;[2] and among the Mang'anja, with whom I lived for four years in British Central Africa, a somewhat similar idea prevails.

This belief in the spirit ownership of land in Ashanti, with its attendant legal consequences, seems, however, considerably modified by the Ashanti belief in the limitation of the field of operation of departed spirits to the people of their own clan.

The replies of an old Ashanti to the following questions will explain my meaning. I asked him if, when the Ashanti conquered new territory in the past, either of strangers or of their own people, they were not afraid of the wrath of the spirit owners of the land they had seized.

The answer came without the slightest hesitation:

'Certainly not (*dabi da*); in the first case, the spirits of people not our own clan cannot affect us as they can only take revenge for any wrong on their own kindred, and secondly, in the case of our own people, if you defeat and make subject to you some of your own clan, you have also rendered subject to you and harmless the ghost ancestors of the people you have subjugated.'

A case of what might be termed 'peaceful usurpation' seems, however, to be another matter, and the following incident, which I witnessed before I had made any inquiries into matters connected with land tenure, and before I knew any of the facts just recorded, seems strictly relevant. By the courtesy of a certain chief, I was permitted to attend an *Adae* ceremony.[3]

[1] *The Natives of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast.*

[2] I believe that Mr. Cardinal's 'Spirits of the land' may be very possibly the ghosts of its former owners.

[3] I have now attended many *adae* so I feel I am not betraying the confidence of a friend whose kindness in allowing me to attend a ceremony put me in possession of information I would otherwise not have obtained.

This particular 'Stool' had come into being under somewhat unusual circumstances, which had resulted in its being rather poor as regards land. Its boundaries had fluctuated owing to civil and other wars in days prior to British occupation and later in the days of our own administration; the result being that, as I discovered later, the boundary of the stool land had in one direction overlapped the land of an adjacent lesser but friendly stool, with whom the more important was intimately connected by marriage. The fact that the boundary was not quite in order was allowed to pass unchallenged by the party concerned. I knew nothing about all this at the time, but at this particular *Adae*, after the ceremony in the stool-house, and after the state reception held on these occasions, the chief and his officers proceeded to a grove in the forest; here were arrayed in two rows eleven little enamel bowls—such as may be bought in any store for a shilling or so—and into each of these was poured out palm wine from a large demijohn (Fig. 100). I noticed, however, that the names spoken over these bowls were not the names spoken in the stool-house. Every attempt to find out who the spirits were that were thus propitiated resulted in complete failure to elicit any information, and as it was quite clear to me that there was something here the people wished to hide, I did not press my questions further. It was only some time after that I was secretly told from another source that these spirits were the real owners of that piece of land, and as the two stools were on a friendly footing, they were duly propitiated to avoid any possibility of unpleasantness for either of the parties concerned.[1]

In a court of law, the larger and more important stool would no doubt be ready to swear to their right to this piece of land, were that right disputed by the other party, and many witnesses would doubtless be forthcoming to testify to the justice of their claim; to the dead, who are more powerful than the living, due acknowledgement was made.

I now propose to examine how the more strictly legal side of this subject shows the influence of the aforementioned beliefs. Before treating of the unwritten permanent law relating to land, however, it will be advisable to review, in so far as reliable

[1] This limitation in the power of ancestral spirits was alluded to in Chap. III of this series, 'Matrilineal Descent in Ashanti.'

tradition has made such a course possible, the probable stages of social evolution of this people leading up to recent historical times, when they were more or less loosely united under one chief, called ' the King of Ashanti '.

The materials available for such an historical review are of a fairly trustworthy character. The tribal memory, which is in the custody of persons whose sole duty is to retain in their heads an accurate record of names and events in the correct chronological order, is, I am inclined to believe, as likely to contain, in many respects, as reliable a record as can be found in many written histories.

The custodians of the tribal lore, each of whom has his or her understudy, have to be absolutely ' word perfect '. Their memory is constantly exercised in the numerous rites they attend at which they have to repeat correctly long lists of names and events in their proper order.

At one ceremony I attended, at which two old women had to recite the titles of the great ancestral spirits as far back as there was any record, I was informed that in the old days two executioners (*abrafo*) would have been detailed to stand behind them, and that if they made a mistake they were ' taken away '. The *kwadwumfo* again—these extraordinary singers or minstrels, who drone like a hive of bees in the chief's ear at every Wednesday and Sunday *Adae*—the names and deeds of the departed kings, must also become perfect at their task.

In written histories, clerical and typographical errors creep in, or even at times deliberate misstatements may be introduced, all of which tend to become perpetuated in subsequent editions.

Ashanti traditional lore carries us back to the time when the various clans, that were later to be loosely united under one king, were living in isolated, independent groups, owning no common head, but each looking upon the senior woman of the clan, the Queen Mother, who delegated some of her power to her male kinsman, as its head.

We may assume that all land in the first instance belonged to a number of isolated and independent family or kindred household groups. That is, we have Family land.[1]

[1] The influx of other blood necessitated by the rule of exogamy did not complicate land matters in any degree, for no one, not of the clan, could under ordinary circumstances, succeed to the land of the clan.

The next stage was where these isolated family groups—owning at first only the head of the family group as having any authority over them—united to form one large composite group, consisting of all the members of one clan, in addition to their wives, and chose one member out of all the scattered, hitherto independent, family groups as chief or head of the now united group.

The land of the individual family groups, now viewed as a whole, became the tribal land.

Just as the head of the little family group had possibly distributed the family land and assumed some sort of indirect control over it, so the new head chosen to command the whole clan assumed some authority over the land of his clansmen who now nominally held it from him in return for certain services.

This brings us at once to the possible origin of stool lands. The Belfield report—already referred to—in § 26, p. 8, states as follows :

'. . . Tribal lands appear to be those which have for reasons not thoroughly elucidated, been disassociated from the control of the occupant of the stool . . .'

A very careful examination of this question has convinced me that the above supposition is not correct, and that to ggest that originally tribal land arose out of stool lands is, I believe, to put the cart before the horse. I am convinced that stool lands had their origin in family lands and not vice versâ.[1]

In the brief sketch outlined above I have suggested how at a certain stage in the social evolution of the Ashanti, a number of independent family groups chose the head of one of these groups to be head of the whole group. This head would already be the owner (in the very limited sense to be described later) of the lands of his own household or kindred group, but when he became head not only of his own group but of all the other groups composed of members of his own blood, and the title

[1] I am not disputing the fact that once the social organization evolved chiefs, and when an exodus of a whole more or less organized community to new lands took place, that in such a case the chief would in all probability allot himself stool lands and then distribute the remainder among his followers in families ; but such a procedure is of course of comparatively recent growth, and very far from being the elemental process that here concerns us.

and powers of a chief came to be bestowed upon him,[1] his piece of family land would come to be looked upon as an appurtenance of his chieftainship, and from merely being the family land of the family supplying the ruler, would become, by this association, the nucleus of all stool land.

This stool land came later to be augmented by one of the following processes :

(*a*) By Conquest (*konim*). When the king or a chief returned from war, he made grants of land to his war chiefs (*asafohene*). This accounts for the fact of certain stools having land far distant from the original stool property.

(*b*) Escheat (*awunyadie*), not common ; this will be described later under the heading of ' Services '.

(*c*) Gift (*akyede*). An incident of conquest.

(*d*) Forfeiture (*adwoyiye*). Extremely rare unless a whole family or tribe be involved in the offence.

(*e*) Purchase. Of comparatively recent growth and formerly, I am convinced, unknown.

I have endeavoured to describe in the abstract what Ashanti tradition will disclose to us only in the concrete. The little family groups, the clans or classes, the gradual welding together into a loose confederation under one king at Coomassie, all are recorded in their unwritten history, which preserves the names of real men and women, who were the ancestral heads of the primitive kindred group, and finally their kings and queens of the Oyoko blood. It is from the advent of the last named, as might be expected, that their historians have been at most pains to prevent the record passing into oblivion. It is their titles and deeds that a central government, anxious to maintain a central authority, have endeavoured to make familiar. This has been done at the expense perhaps of the earlier traditional history which preceded this grouping of independent families, clans, and classes under one authority. This is the reason, I believe, that makes it so difficult, unless we probe under the surface, to trace Ashanti records back later than about the end of the fifteenth century.

[1] When I speak throughout of the chief, I am assigning to him the position fully described in Chap. III, ' Matrilineal Descent in Ashanti '.

I have endeavoured to trace the religious and historical aspects of this subject, both of which help to a better understanding of the more strictly legal side, which it is next proposed to examine. Before entering upon a detailed examination of the various processes of the Ashanti law which regulated the holding and alienation of land there are two statements in the Belfield report which I think require further examination. One is contained on p. 8:

(*a*) '. . . The Crown possesses the inherent right of *ultimus haeres* to any land to which no owner can be found.'

(*b*) And the other, where in § 19, p. 7, it is stated:

'In the days prior to the advent of European enterprise in the inland districts, when the operations of white traders were confined to such business as could be carried on from the fortified stations on the coast, the land was of little or no value in the estimation of the people of the country.'

The first of the two instances above is perhaps of only minor importance, for it is a purely hypothetical event which could, in one sense, never actually happen.

In Ashanti, there can be no such thing as land being without an owner. Every foot of land, indefinite and uncertain as topographical boundaries may be, belongs to some one. This fact being accepted, the only way in which land could come to be ownerless would be by the extinction of a family group. Supposing that in such a case provision had not been made for that event by the procedure of allowing an *odonko ba*,[1] or so-called slave, to succeed, the land would then seem to become without an owner; but Ashanti law made full provision for such an emergency, and such land would be at once absorbed by the stool under whom the now extinct clan or family had held it. It would not, even under a system which came later to acknowledge the Ashanti King as Lord Paramount of all land, revert to that King. It therefore seems illogical, if not impossible, that the Crown should ever in such a case become the *ultimus haeres*.

The second statement, though in itself of no great importance, nevertheless gives such a totally wrong impression of the ideas of this people in the past, that it may be as well here to correct it.

[1] See Chap. I, 'The Ashanti Classificatory System.'

Fig. 100. Here were arranged in two rows eleven little enamel bowls

The proverbial sayings of a people constitute an epitome of their thoughts, and present tersely and briefly something which every one already knows and the national consciousness feels and thinks. Now a universally known Ashanti proverb runs: *tumi nyina wo asase so* ('all power is in land'), and when we come presently to examine the system of land tenure upon which the Ashanti confederacy was based, we shall understand how the national belief in the value and power of land came to give that idea a place among the Ashanti national proverbial sayings.

The recognition thus given to the value of land, coupled with the spiritual associations already described, sufficiently explain, I think, the reluctance of an Ashanti to part with the title to his land, except in case of very great necessity. It is these factors which have caused the process of alienation known as 'sale' to be absent altogether, in the not very remote past, from the Ashanti code of land laws.

The student of the English law of Real Property who comes to examine the Ashanti law relating to that subject, will at first be astonished to find that a system, which he had been taught to believe was peculiar to his own country, had an almost exact replica in West Africa among the Ashanti.

Topham, one of our authorities in the law of Real Property, writes, 'The law relating to land is the most difficult branch of English law, partly because it is peculiar to England and differs widely from any other system, and partly because it is founded in ancient rules and formalities invented to suit a society in which writing was almost unknown, and land was by far the most important form of wealth.'

The student who argues that the similarity in our own ancient feudal land laws to the system evolved in Ashanti was due to any culture contact or to European influences is, I believe, arguing on a faulty premiss. The human mind and human intelligence, even among peoples so widely separated in culture as the Ashanti and the English of the eleventh century, seem often to have reacted in a like manner to a similar stimulus, and the Ashanti, under certain conditions not unlike those existing at the time of the Norman conquest, seem to have evolved an almost exactly similar land code. This is not a matter of

surprise when we know that our own laws, like theirs, were ' invented to suit a state of society in which writing was almost unknown and land was by far the most important form of wealth '.

The King of Ashanti was acknowledged as the Lord Paramount of all land in his loosely united Kingdom. We have already seen how the Oyoko clan, by reason of their special ability, but possibly owing more to the Priest ('*Komfo*) Anotchi—' the Ashanti Cardinal Wolsey ', as Sir Francis Fuller aptly terms him—than to any other one man, gradually, by this administrative ability and by warlike enterprises, built up a Central Government at Coomassie at the head of which stood the Ashanti King (*Asante 'hene*). This monarch, however, was always held very much in check by his hereditary councillors, and still more by the clan system, by reason of which no single free man, woman, or child, could ever be considered or treated as a separate entity apart from his or her clan. In this respect his power was much less real than that wielded by William I. The latter had come as a foreign conqueror to a foreign land when the clan system was dead or dying.

The parallel is more exact perhaps when we come to consider the conquests of the Ashanti Kings in the north, east, and west over other peoples who were of different races.

This Central Government simply adopted the procedure with which all had been familiar in the days of their isolated group existence.

The greater chiefs, Mampon, Kokofu, Juaben, &c., became the tenants *in capite* of the Ashanti King, but continued to enjoy more or less undisputed right to their lands, as the clan and family likewise in turn did to theirs. All (some in a greater, others in a lesser degree) were subject now, however, to certain services to the king at Coomassie, and these services were simply based on the same general principles which obtained among the individual members of the family groups which they rendered to the family head, to the clan head, and so on up the social scale. What these services were will now be examined in detail.

Services (*Osom*). By far the most important service demanded of a tenant by his chief or over-lord was *Military Service*, known in Ashanti as *Osako*—the obligation incumbent upon the tenant

and his family to follow and fight for him from whom he held his land. To refuse such an obligation was unthinkable. If you ask an Ashanti to-day what would have happened to any one refusing this service, he will simply say he could not have refused; but if he, and his *abusua* (family), did so, then their land would be forfeited. That this obligation implied a very great and real service, in days which are yet so recent as to be remembered by men now alive, is clear to any student of Ashanti history. I lay some stress on this point for reasons that will be clear later.

We have seen that a clansman's own children could never be of their father's clan, and the natural question here suggests itself as to their attitude in the event of war between their own and their father's clan. There is little doubt in my own mind that originally the tie of blood was the stronger bond and the only one that counted, and that son would be arrayed against father and father against son. The *Omanhene* of Mampon informs me, however, that at a later date matters had been so far adjusted that it was understood that one son must fight for the father's clan, while the other was at liberty to join those of his own blood.[1]

Fealty. The tenant had to swear fealty to his chief, and the chief to his king. This was known as *nsua*. The ceremony of swearing fealty by a sub-chief was as follows. The man advanced before the chief, who was seated on his stool, and removed his sandals; perhaps, if of high rank, he would stand upon them. A sword (*afona*) was handed to him. This he raised to the sky and then dropped the point to earth, bending his head, upon the crown of which the chief placed the sole of his left foot, while his subject took the following oath:

'*Se wo de me asi akonua yi so yi, se m'ansom wo som pa, se m'ammoa wo mmoa pa ma w'ammu man yi, na se me twa wo nkontompo biara a, me ka ntam na 'Nyame ne Asase enya me.*'

'As you have put me on this stool, if I do not render you good service, if I do not give you good help to rule this people,

[1] This is probably a very modern solution of the difficulty.

and if I tell you any falsehood whatever, I swear the oath, then may the Sky God and the Earth (deity) " get " me.'

A stranger on being given land also swore fealty, but in such a case both tenant and owner (the latter, if a chief, by proxy) would drink *abosom.*[1]

Reliefs. Reliefs, in the language of feudal tenure, were sums payable on the death of a tenant. Reliefs have their exact parallel in Ashanti and were variously known as *ayiyo*, *awunyadie* or *ayibuadie*. These formed one of the main sources of revenue of a king or chief.

Bowdich mentions that the King of Ashanti was part heir to all his subjects, and in his capacity as such, according to the rule of Ashanti law, contributed to their funeral expenses. This statement is rather misleading, however, for the casual reader might infer therefrom that the *Asante 'hene* was heir to every Ashanti man in his kingdom. Such was not the case. His right was restricted and well defined; his *amanhene*, *ahenfo*, and *asafohene* each in his grade having those to whom he had the right to become part heir. One point must, however, be very clearly noted. This right to a share in a subject's estate (one-half or sometimes one-third) only applied to the deceased's personal, individual, and privately acquired property; land could not be touched, for individual ownership in land did not exist. This law, which amounted to ' hands off ' family property, applied not only to immovable but to movable wealth. This right of inheritance, as noted already, made it incumbent upon the heir to send a contribution (*nsa*) towards the deceased's funeral expenses.[2]

Reliefs formed one of the great sources of a stool's revenue in the past. The practice has, I am informed, fallen into abeyance since our occupation of the country, and thus one of the main sources of a stool's revenue has been cut off, a point to which I shall revert later.

Next in importance come those services which in the Feudal

[1] This custom is commonly called ' drinking fetish ', it is described in Chap. VIII.

[2] In certain cases—e.g. Mampon and Jamasi—on the death of a chief of the latter division, the *Omanhene* of Mampon would receive not half the latter's estate but half of the *nsa* or total donation contributed towards the funeral.

system were classed under the heading of Aids. These again had their almost exact parallel in Ashanti. They are there generically classed and known as *Etuo*. *Etuo* were of many kinds, and a few of these are still to be found in force.

(*a*) Aids (*ayi'tuo*), to pay for expenses of a chief's funeral.

(*b*) Levies (*oman'tuo*) for purpose of making purchases for the stool or its regalia, buildings, or for liquidating stool debts (also called *akonya ka'tuo*).

(*c*) Contributions for expenses of a war (*apea'tuo*), levied after the war, not before.

(*d*) Contribution for *musuo* (religious customs).[1]

Escheat (*awunyadie*) : if a tenant died without heirs, we have seen (*supra*) that his estate, consisting of movable property, slaves, money, &c., escheated to his overlord.

Forfeiture. Certain capital offences, e.g. cursing the king, adultery with the king's wives, were punished with forfeiture (*awunie* or *awunyadie*), but in such a case scrupulous care was taken not to seize any family property (*agyapadie*), unless indeed the whole family were involved in the crime. Land was thus nearly always exempt from forfeiture.[2]

Treasure Trove (*ahuntuo*) belonged to the owner of land on which it was found, with a share falling to the king.

Services of an agricultural nature (*afum adwumayo*) were rendered, by the lesser important persons, every man and woman would work on the chief's farm a few days each year.

Suit of Court (*asemtie*). The subjects had to attend the chief's court.

The following are the heads under which tenure in Ashanti may be classified. I borrow the terms of English law, but it is necessary in using these to do so with a full understanding of certain points wherein the Ashanti law differs from our own. If we keep this reservation constantly in mind, the legal terminology with which we are familiar is otherwise suitable.

[1] In this connexion it is interesting to note that valuable presents were sent to the north by the Ashanti in olden times to solicit prayers for the nation at 'Nyame-fre-bere (Mecca). Bowdich noted the power and influence of the 'Moors' in Coomassie one hundred years ago and the Ashanti faith in Mohammedan charms.

[2] In the recent trial of the offenders who desecrated the Golden Stool, the native tribunal which recommended the death sentence asked only for the confiscation of the offenders' goods.

Freehold { 1. Fee simple. 2. Fee tail. 3. Life, or other defined estate of uncertain duration.

Leasehold: for a term of years, or other period of definite duration.

1. Fee simple. The fullest form of ownership in land known in our law is *a fee simple*.

A tenant in fee simple is now for all practical purposes full owner of his land.

I have borrowed the term fee simple to describe the commonest form of tenure known in the past among the Ashanti, but in doing so certain modifications and reservations in the term, when thus applied, must be clearly understood to exist. That the use of this term is perfectly legitimate, however, will be the better understood if I outline very briefly the history of such a tenancy in English law.

A grant in fee simple did not originally empower the owner to sell or alienate his land. A grant to 'A' and his heirs was construed as it was intended by the donor, and 'A' could not alienate or part with, the land during his life by sale or gift, or on his death, by will. The ancient Ashanti law was thus almost identical with the law in England prior to such statutes as *Quia Emptores* and the Statute of Wills, which respectively allowed free substitution of another tenant in fee simple in place of the original tenant, and permitted bequests of land to be made.

The whole history of our own early land laws seems to show a struggle to attain the right to alienate land. Every device and subtlety of the legal mind had to be brought to bear to destroy the barriers raised in the remote past, owing to deeply rooted and perhaps now forgotten causes which were in opposition to alienation.

Similar as the Ashanti law seems in this respect to our own prior to 1290, one most important difference must not be overlooked.

The 'owner' of a fee simple in Ashanti, and the 'owner' in England in the days of Edward I, occupied a very different legal position. It is necessary to remember that when we speak of a chief, a head of a clan, the head of a family group, as being

the ' owners ' of land, we are dealing with a state of society in which individual ownership in land was literally unknown. The Ashanti tenant in fee simple neither had nor has anything like the full enjoyment and control during his lifetime that the ' owner ' had in England even before the latter gained the right to alienate. The Ashanti owner has to account in full and be subject not only to the control of councillors, clansmen, and family, but finally, as already noted, in virtue of his spiritual trusteeship, to the dead. It may even be that the dead may return and again claim their own.

The word ' heirs ', when used in this context, must also of course be construed in the sense in which succession is reckoned under a system of matrilineal descent.

With these two reservations a fee simple means in Ashanti very much what it once meant in English law.

2. An Estate Tail. An estate in fee tail or, more shortly, an estate tail, is one which can only descend to the issue of the tenant. As in Ashanti a male can never, under any ordinary circumstances, be succeeded by his own children—who are not his ' blood ' or *abusua* [1]—it might appear at first sight that such a tenancy could not exist except of course when the property of a female was being considered. There was a practice known and one still found in Ashanti, however (perhaps a survival of matrilocal marriage), whereby a man on his marriage was sometimes given a piece of land by his wife's family upon which to build and settle. The grant was to the man and his issue, not to his heirs. This similarity to our own law, however, perhaps only arises from the fact that by this union the man's *issue* would of course belong to the clan or blood of those who made the grant, and the land did not go to his *heirs* because they were naturally of another clan than the donor's. The man has therefore a life interest [2] which may, however, be terminated at any time on his marriage being broken off owing to misconduct on his part. Should a grant of land be made, however, by the man's family, it will revert to the grantors. Thus neither his wife nor children may succeed, but the children and possibly

[1] For full account of which see ' The Ashanti Classificatory System ', Chap. I.

[2] But he cannot sell or mortgage.

the wife will have a right to live in the house after his death, subject to good behaviour, the reason for this being that she will probably become the property of her late husband's heir. It has been noted that an estate may be given to a man for his life or as long as he remains the husband of a certain woman. Lands were also often granted to a favourite household slave for life with reversion to the donor, but the slave's children, as long as they served the household, were often in practice allowed to continue to occupy and use the land after the death of the original grantee.

Leaseholds. A form of tenure that may perhaps be classified under this heading exists when the grantee held land from the grantor in return for a fixed annual payment in the form of a proportion of the produce derived from the soil. Such a tenure came into being by the owner—with the permission of his family —saying to the grantee in the presence of witnesses, '*Me de asase yi ma wo, fwe so ma me*,' 'I give this land to you, look after it for me.' Such a lease gave the grantee perhaps only a tenancy at will, but on the other hand the arrangement might run indefinitely and even be carried on by the original grantee's heir. The lease, however, was terminable at any time subject to the tenant's right to gather the year's crops.

Military Service and Aids were optional, as the lessee, if he did not wish to give them, would give up the land. Wine for the *samanfo* (spirits of the dead) was always part of the transfer ceremony.

Another form of tenure, which at first sight appears very like a leasehold, also existed. This was called *awowa*. A closer examination of this, however, will, I think, show that it is purely an incident arising out of a mortgage of land, and it will therefore be dealt with under the next heading where the alienation of land will be discussed.

Alienation of Land. From the foregoing remarks it has been seen that there is in Ashanti no such thing as the individual ownership of land. Now something that could never belong to one person, but which was always in the hands of an interested group, was, from its very nature, not likely to be stolen, lost sight of, sold, seized, or given away. When the thing in which this kind of joint tenancy existed, was also the most valuable

asset it was possible to possess, and there was also attached to it a kind of spiritual sanctity, it is not surprising to find that the idea of sale as an ordinary primary legal process did not have any place in the old legal code.

We have seen that this communal and family interest in land protected it from forfeiture, even when a clansman had committed some capital offence, and that the king, despotic as he was in many ways, did not dare to seize the offender's land, because he would have had opposition from the whole clan.

It has been stated that the Ashanti looked upon his or her land—for women could own land quite apart from men—as their greatest worldly asset; the proof of this belief may be readily seen in an examination of the reasons which led to the commonest and possibly the only original form of alienation of land.

Grants in fee simple to a tribesman or often even to a stranger (e.g. to a Fanti) were, in later times and before the advent of the European, constantly made with the full consent of all the interested parties, a fraction of the tribal or family or stool land only being involved. This grant was not made for any monetary consideration; no purchase-money was asked for or paid, all that was necessary was a small offering of rum to the spirits, who were told of the transaction, when the plot became the property of the new-comer and his heirs. The valuable consideration that the owner looked for, and in the past freely received, was the 'services' already described. The grantor was thus enriched by the acquisition of a new family household who would serve him and fight for him when called upon.

The grantee became to all intents and purposes owner of the land, but should he or his heir deny the title of the grantor to the reversion, or set himself up as independent of the obligations he was expected to render, then the title to the land would immediately revert to the grantor. A grant of land in fee simple was made in the presence of the parties interested and their witnesses. The words of limitation are important, '*Me de asase yi kye wo*,' 'I take this land and I present you.' It may seem to us at this present day an extraordinary thing that an Ashanti, who looks with such deep aversion on the sale of his land even in return for a substantial sum of money, should in

the past have been ready and willing to encourage strangers to take up their abode on his land and granted to them what was to all intent a fee simple for a consideration which at first sight may seem to us as inconsiderable. If we consider the matter, however, we will see that nowhere did the genius of this people show itself more markedly than in their land laws. By this generous encouragement of settlers and strangers, all of whom became attached to the clan or stool which had given them settlements, the followers of a chief were increased in number and his wealth also thereby indirectly increased. The grant in fee simple, as we have seen, was in return for certain definite services, the most onerous of which was undoubtedly the obligation to fight for the grantor. Such a grant possibly was not looked upon in the light of alienation at all. The grantor had more land than he or his family could possibly use, by giving a small portion to 'A and his heirs', he possibly did not feel he was losing the land at all, he was only gaining other subjects who swelled his retinue. The reversion, in case the grantee died without heirs, was to himself; and if the grantee ever repudiated the obligation he had undertaken, the land automatically reverted to the grantor. Such an alienation, complete as we are now inclined to think it to be, was very different from handing over land for a valuable consideration, the acceptance of which gave the purchaser complete control over his purchase and complete freedom from any form of services to the vendor.

A mortgage in English law is a transaction by which a tenant of land can borrow money on the security of his land. A parallel is found in the Ashanti law, the word in Ashanti for a mortgage being *awowa*. The mortgagor is called *okafo*, and the mortgagee *osikani*. The Ashanti mortgage was of two kinds. In both the borrower has what the Roman law called the *dominium* and the *jus possidendi*. He entered upon the land and made full use of it. The produce derived from the land was in one case his interest on the loan, and the land itself was the security; and in the other the sale of the produce for a fixed time was taken as liquidating the entire loan and interest. The procedure was as follows. The mortgagor and mortgagee, with adult witnesses, would view the land and boundaries. Out of the mort-

gage money rum would be bought and the mortgagor would pour some over his stools—if he were a chief—to inform his *samanfo* (spirit ancestors) of the transaction, and beg of them to give their assistance to help him in time to redeem the mortgage. The words spoken being as follows :

' *Me nananom nsamanfo, mo ngye nsa yi nom, na nye me na me ye biribie, na eka na ato me na m'aton asase a ewo ha yi 'ama Asumasi me de m'atua me ka.*'

' My spirit grandfathers, receive this wine and drink, for it is not I who am at fault, but a debt which has fallen upon me so that I have to sell this land here to So-and-so and pay my debt.'

The money advanced was paid over to the mortgagor in the presence of his and the mortgagee's witnesses. Of this sum a proportion, called *ntiani*, about *ntaku-num* in the *suru* (2*s.* 6*d.* in the £), was set aside and this was usually divided into three parts. One part went to the chief and Queen Mother, if they were presiding over the transaction, and the remaining two-thirds were divided among the witnesses. This *ntiani* seems in a mortgage or pledge exactly what *tramma* was in a sale. The *raison d'être* of each was to secure trustworthy witnesses who would in the event of a dispute come forward to testify to what had occurred. Such a mortgage might, according to native ideas, run on for generations, but no lapse of time (limitation) would bar redemption, nor could the mortgagor, according to the Ashanti law, be improved out of his land.[1] The axiom of English law, ' once a mortgage always a mortgage ', was even more strictly construed as a precept of Ashanti law. The mortgagee could never foreclose without giving the mortgagor the fullest chance to redeem. There is a proverb which has all the force of a legal axiom, which runs, ' *Se okafo adie eko amoamu*

[1] The same law seems to hold good in the Ewe country, east of the Volta, for in the late German Colony of Togo I had constantly the heirs of the mortgagor bringing to the heirs of the mortgagee the redemption money for land pledged perhaps fifty to one hundred years ago, for sometimes the equivalent in value of 4*s.* 6*d.*, and demanding their land back. Very often this land had been planted with cocoa by the mortgagee's heirs and was now worth several hundreds of pounds. Equity would not allow the old law to stand, and I used to rule that, besides the sum originally paid, the heir of the mortgagee should receive full compensation for the cocoa trees. This generally resulted in the claim of redemption being allowed to drop altogether.

a onoara na oton,' 'If the mortgagor's property is all to be sold, then it is he himself who does the selling.' Should the mortgagee seize the land, i.e. refuse to acknowledge the mortgagor's right of the redemption, then the mortgagor would have just cause for action on the ground that the mortgagee, *wa yi no adwo*. This expression requires explanation. *Yi adwo* means, to seize some property of a debtor, to compel him to pay a debt. This custom—on the coast—according to Bosman, grew to such an extent that it came to creditors seizing any one or anything belonging even to the clan of the debtor or even any one from his village in order to compel payment. A wise law of Kwaku Dua Panyin (*c.* 1838) is said to have made this practice illegal in Ashanti. The mortgagee's remedy, if he insisted upon repayment of his loan, lay in going to the chief and stating his case; then the family of the mortgagor were all called together and either came to an agreement jointly to meet the debt, or they agreed to the *awowa* (mortgage) becoming a *tramma*, i.e. a sale. This only as a last resource and in case the clan had 'waxen too poor' ever to hope to pay.

Sale (*tramma*). A transaction, I believe, originally used only for movable property, then coming gradually to be used also for land dealings, first only when arising out of a mortgage, and later perhaps as a primary process. The history of this word is interesting, and as I have not seen it fully explained before, an account of it will be given.

Tramma means literally cowries, the small shells from the Indian Ocean which, by the route from the north, found their way all over West Africa, and to this day may be seen used for small change in the native markets. The word came to be applied to a sale of movable or immovable property in the following manner. No contract of sale was valid in olden times unless a payment called *tramma* had been made. *Tramma* was the name derived from that sum, additional to the selling price, which was set aside and given to the witnesses of the transaction. It was a fixed proportional amount, and, at least for certain specified articles, seemed uniform, e.g. the *tramma* on the purchase of a cat—the old Ashanti bought cats as repositories of their *okra* or breath—was always a *pesewa*, about 1*d.*; for a female slave, *ntaku-anan*, about 2*s.*; for a male slave, *ntaku-*

miensa, 1*s.* 6*d.* In the case of such purchases no part of the *tramma* could be used by vendor or purchaser, and it was said that if a purchaser used any of it to buy food with it for his purchase, the slave or cat would die. This *tramma* may perhaps be called 'earnest money', but it was not originally paid to the vendor. If the transaction was afterwards repudiated, the receivers of the *tramma* were the witnesses to vouch for the transaction. The word therefore came to be used to designate a sale outright as opposed to *awowa*, 'pledge', or in case of land, 'mortgage'.

The procedure adopted in the case of land when the mortgagee wished to foreclose was generally as follows. All the *abusua* (clan) of the interested parties, the head of the particular stool, his spokesman, and the Queen Mother, met. The spokesman opened the case, stating the reasons that made it necessary to sell the land. The chief would then call all the family of the mortgagor and endeavour to arrange that the debt be shared among them. If this was found impossible, permission was then given for the *awowa* to become a *tramma* transaction, the price being agreed upon and counted out in the presence of all. The spokesman would then publicly inform the mortgagor that the *awowa* or mortgage had now become a *tramma* sale, and that henceforth he and his family had no claim whatever on the land.[1] Next the chief in whose presence the sale price was fixed and paid, together with the spokesman and representatives of the vendor and purchaser and representatives of his village, all proceeded to view the land, the subject of the transaction. Boundaries were fixed, trees, a river, a hill, and the connecting lines marked by planting out *ntome* (*nton abe*) cuttings. If this land be already cultivated, being near the village, palm wine is bought by vendor and purchaser and drunk by all present on the spot. If the land be virgin forest or bush, a hunter is sent to kill an antelope. A tree is then cut down and a rough mortar (called *dasie*) made, in which *fufu* is pounded, and *eto* made. Some of the blood of the antelope is sprinkled upon the ground. The lungs and some *eto* are then placed in *adwin* leaves and the spirit of the land addressed as follows:

[1] Even this did not, however, as will be seen later, entirely destroy all possibility of redemption.

'*Asase boa ode nsie begye eto ne enam yi di, na nipa a m'aton asase yi 'ama no, se oba so a, mma biribi nye no.*'

'Earth Creature who rules the underworld, come and receive this *eto* and meat, and eat, and the man to whom I have sold this land, when he comes upon it do not let anything befall him.'

The purchaser must build a hut on this spot, which is called *nnanso*.

It is probable that the essential parts of this formula of sale were :

1. The competency of the contracting parties, i. e. the participation of all members of the family.
2. The witnessing by the proper persons in authority.
3. The viewing of the land and fixing of the boundaries.
4. The valuable consideration.
5. The payment of the *tramma*.

The spiritual part of the procedure, as between the parties and their ancestral spirits and their gods, was probably not essential to make the sale a valid transaction. A sale directly negotiated would no doubt be conducted on very similar lines. No old Ashanti I have hitherto asked but has informed me, however, that before a sale would be resorted to, the debtor—it is always assumed that only dire necessity would ever justify a sale—would try to raise money by a loan (*awowa*). In fact the farther my inquiries led me the more convinced I became that sale of land outright for a valuable consideration is a comparatively modern innovation, and that it was literally unknown because unthinkable in the remoter past. Such a transaction even as *tramma* was not, however, looked upon as alienation of the land beyond all hope of redemption, for in Ashanti there is evidence of yet a further possibility of regaining the land long after a legal sale had taken place. This is so curious that I had at first thought it was merely an incident of redemption following after *awowa* or mortgage. I am inclined to think, however, it is quite distinct. The procedure was for the vendor, or even the heir of the vendor, first to approach his chief with the request that as he now is in a position to repurchase his family land he might be allowed to do so, paying the money originally received, also an ' overplus '.

A sheep was bought (and afterwards sacrificed), and if the purchaser agreed, the land once more came into the original family that had owned it. Should the purchaser or his heirs in the meantime have made a family burial-ground upon the land, this portion was not re-conveyed. The procedure is known as *pon*, and the redeemer is said to *pon asase*. Without much doubt public opinion and the influence of a chief would generally result in the request being granted.[1]

Wills of Land (*samansie*). One of the problems and difficulties that assail the administrator in Ashanti, who, while anxious as far as is possible to encourage and retain the indigenous customs and laws of the people in order that they may develop these rather than adopt the entirely new code of a foreign race—a code that can never be so perfectly suited to their own particular genius—is to be found in the growing tendency of individualism to assert itself and to resist the communistic régime which in the past had served this people so well and saved it from extortion and despoilment by despots and powerful enemies. In no sphere is this more clearly marked than in the application of the laws of Real Property. A man, who chiefly by his own individual efforts and industry has developed and cultivated his family land, increases its value many times. It may, and does seem to us, and later to himself, unfair that this new wealth should have to pass on his death to those members of his family who are his heirs by law, his own sons being thus always excluded. Many of the more educated Africans feel this acutely, and it might seem that there is no other remedy but either a complete severance from the clan and matrilineal system, or a placid resignation to a state of affairs

[1] The almost exact similarity of this curious custom to the old Levitical law may be noted.

'The land shall not be sold for ever for the land is mine' . . . 'If thy brother be waxen poor and has sold away some of his possessions and if any of his kin come to redeem then shall he redeem that which his brother sold.'

A school of thought in West Africa, headed by the late Sir A. B. Ellis, has tried to show that any parallel in Gold Coast customs and beliefs with the doctrines of Christian Theology is due to the influence of contact with European missionary teachings. This is especially the case in regard to their God 'Nyame whom Ellis described as only the thinly disguised Jehovah of English and German missionaries. I think we are here safe, however, from any suggestion that mission teaching in the past included in its curricula a course of Old Testament laws governing Real Property, with the consequent formulation of an Ashanti land code based on Levitical formulae.

which must cramp initiative and individual effort. Their own laws, however, indicate that a compromise is possible, and suggest that a way may be found out of an impasse where the old and the new seem to clash hopelessly.

We have seen already that in England there was once an era when the owner of land in fee simple was not allowed to alienate such land by will, but that this law was later altered, first by a conveyance *inter vivos* accompanied by a trust (cf. the *Paterfamilias* selling his *familia* to a *familiae emptor*, subject to the *fiducia*), and later by the Statute of Wills (1526).

The Ashanti law-makers would seem to have had an even harder task to make any such a procedure possible. They not only had to combat a disinclination to part with land at all, but in this particular instance had practically to break the entail. Nevertheless, there undoubtedly grew up a recognized method by which a man, with the full consent as usual of his family, could leave by a verbal gift or will, taking effect during his lifetime or after his death, *a portion* of his land to his son. This procedure, known as *samansie* (lit. that which is left by the spirits), has been described to me as follows :

A man, prior to his death, calls his kindred round him and informs them that he wishes to leave a piece of land—it will only be a small portion of the whole—to one of his sons. If the *abusua* agree, then the son will bring a small offering of gold dust and rum called *aseda* (thank-offering), and this is divided among those present, including witnesses. Of the latter there must be at least one. Then the father, taking the rum, pours some upon the ground, addressing the *samanfo* (ancestral spirits) as follows :

' *Nsamanfuo, me ba ni na me de asase yi 'ama no, wa'som me sompa ; se odidi asase no so a mo mma oyare bone bi mmo no, mo ma no nyine nkye, mo ma na'fudie nye yiye.*'

' Spirits, this is my child to whom I have given this land, he has given me good service ; when he comes to make use of the land do not let any bad sickness strike him, let him grow old, and let his crops be plentiful.'

Such a grant passed the fee simple, so the donor's heirs had no further interest in the land which upon the death of the

donee would pass to *his* heirs. It is difficult to hazard an opinion as to the antiquity of this custom in Ashanti, and Sarbah, in his *Fanti Customary Laws*, noting a somewhat similar procedure among the Fanti, remarks that the custom is of 'comparatively modern growth'. On the other hand I am inclined to think that, as the legal sanction imposed for the non-observance of the last wishes of the testator, rested entirely in the sanctity placed upon the words of one who had become a spirit ancestor when his wishes came into force, the custom carries us back to times antecedent to the advent of Europeans.

Such a will is of course still very far removed from our idea of testamentary disposition, whereby the owner of property is permitted to endow 'a college or a cat' and to leave nothing to his relatives.

The *samansie* was only legal when the members of the family agreed to the transfer of the title, for without this consent, and the presence of a witness, such alienation would not have been binding. Nevertheless, the practice shows that not only was the idea of testamentary disposition not wholly unknown but that it was possible under certain circumstances and within very carefully defined limits for a father to leave to his son a small portion of his real estate.

In the first paragraph of the present chapter it was suggested that in the Ashanti land laws, which have now been discussed, we have possibly a key to help in the successful introduction of indirect rule, which in turn I ventured to state I considered depended to a large extent on an adequate revenue for tribal stools. I do not propose to enter here upon any examination as to the merits or demerits of direct as opposed to indirect rule, or to go into the question of stool finances or the possible supervision of stool revenues. I wish, however, to draw attention to a fact which will be clear to any one who has read this chapter carefully. I refer to the circumstance that the Ashanti tenant of to-day (generally) holds his land under changed conditions. These impose upon him less important and fewer obligations than formerly, and thus have robbed the chiefs of by far the most important services and much of the revenue to which they were entitled in the past.

I refer in the first instance to the former obligation of Military Service (*osako*). Had the Ashanti laws continued to be built up and altered from time to time to suit changing circumstances, instead of their passing in a day from conditions peculiar to early feudal times into those of the twentieth century, I think we may assume that, as with our own laws, some payment (scutage) would have been introduced in commutation of an obligation no longer necessary or even possible of fulfilment. Many other incidents of service or, looking at it from another standpoint, of revenue have also disappeared, and in such measure have further lessened the obligations due from the subject, thereby undoubtedly tending to weaken the control of the superior. Among such I may mention e.g. escheat and forfeiture, the former being, I am informed, once a most fruitful source of stool revenue. Some of the Aids alone seem to remain, and to show how well recognized these obligations due to a chief still are, I may mention that I was much interested to hear from a District Commissioner that a certain stool's subjects had lately contributed no less than £6,000 to liquidate a stool debt and pay for certain funeral expenses. Very briefly, then, my contention is this. The most onerous services, in return for which land was formerly held, no longer exist. The people of Ashanti, under our beneficent rule, have thus found themselves relieved of most of the well-recognized obligations to their chiefs. Stool revenues have correspondingly diminished, and as a result, respect, discipline, and obedience are less readily rendered, and more difficult to exact. Side by side with this is a great increase in the value of all land. We have thus landowners holding land, freed from most of the services formerly incumbent upon them—within even their own memory—and now, moreover, in possession of an asset which has assumed a new value. I believe that if the Ashanti were to know that we wish them once again to become a people, proud of their race, of their traditions, and of their past, and to that end that we wish to help to rehabilitate their Queen Mothers and chiefs, their elders (*mpanyinfo*), their spokesmen (*akyeame*), their minstrels (*kwadwomfo*), their drummers (*akyerema*), their heralds (*asene*), and all the wonderful household organization of an Ashanti court, now crumbling into poverty and decay—I believe that they would willingly under-

take their obligation to finance their stools by some form of light taxation. They would do this the more readily if they knew that all the contributions would be subject to an audit and strict control, and that such an *etuo*—representing only a fraction of their past obligations—was to help to restore and to preserve their nationality.

XXII

THE DRUM LANGUAGE

THERE is, I believe, scarcely any other West African art or custom that has aroused so much widespread wonder and curiosity, nor any concerning which such misconception still prevails, as that connected with the West African Drum Language.

I first became interested in this difficult subject many years ago. At that time it was generally known that the Ashanti, in common with certain other West Coast peoples, were able to convey messages over great distances and in an incredibly short space of time by means of drums, and it was thought that their system was based upon some such method as that with which Europeans are familiar in the Morse code.

A brief investigation of the subject, which was embodied in an article from which an extract is here quoted, while proving, I think, that our preconceived ideas concerning this art were erroneous, did not go into the question scientifically. The extract referred to is here given :

'A great deal is heard in Africa about the wonderful way in which news can be passed over great distances in an incredibly short space of time. It has been reported that the news of the fall of Khartoum was known among the natives of Sierra Leone the same day, and other equally wonderful reports are quoted to show that the native has some extraordinary rapid means of communicating important events. It must, however, be remembered that most of the instances one hears quoted are incapable of verification, and would, moreover, probably be found to have been much exaggerated. Having said as much, however, it must be admitted that these people have a means of intercommunication which often inspires wonder and curiosity on the part of Europeans. One such means of communication is by drumming. This idea the European will readily grasp, and being familiar with various means of signalling, will suppose that some such a method might be adapted to drums ; but among the Ashanti the drum is not used as a means of signalling in the sense that we would infer, that is, by rapping out words by means of a prearranged code, but (to the native mind) is

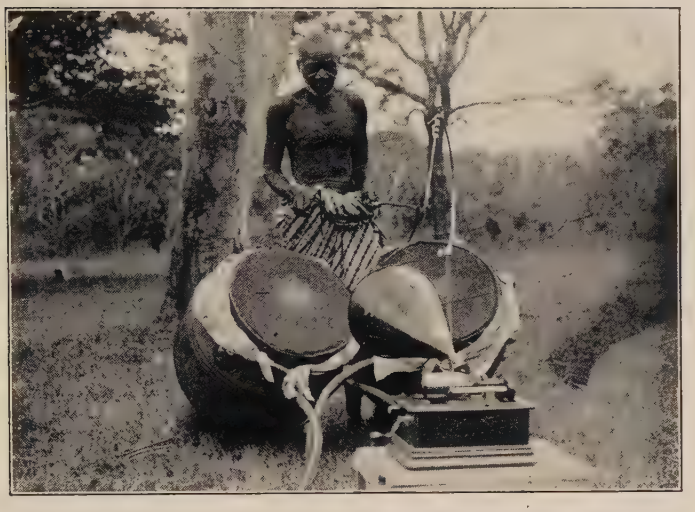


Fig. 101. *Ntumpane* (talking drums)

Fig. 102. Talking drums

used to sound or speak the actual words. That is, we have drum-talking as distinct from drum-signalling, a *tympanophonetic* as opposed to a *tympanosemantic* means of communication. *Tympanophony* or drum-talking is an attempt to imitate by means of two drums, set in different notes, the exact sound of words of the human voice.' [1]

This statement, written nearly ten years ago, and the terminology then employed, still stand the test of time and of a much minuter investigation of the subject, but it remains to prove, if possible, how ' two drums set in different notes ' could possibly be heard as, or made to reproduce, actual spoken words.

In this chapter an attempt will be made to explain this feat, and to prove how, in its local language environment, with certain well-defined limitations, such a thing is not only possible but also linguistically and phonetically natural.

An account will also be given of the appliances used—the drums—containing a description of how they are made, and of the religious observances inseparable from the process of making the drums. Finally an example from one of the ' set pieces ' will be given in full, containing, first the usual overture or prelude common to all drum pieces, and going on to relate the history, in chronological order, of one of the most important Ashanti divisions. This ' piece ' in itself a wonderful storehouse of anthropological material, from its very nature, has remained untouched and unspoiled by civilization.

A complete series of phonographic records has been made of this particular drum-history, and these will be available for future detailed examination[2] (see Figs. 101 and 102).

In order the better to understand my subject, I prevailed upon some of the experts to give me lessons in drumming. What is here recorded is therefore based upon an elementary, practical knowledge of the subject.

For our present purpose it will be necessary to make what may, at first sight, appear an unnecessary excursion into the realms of phonetics and of philology. These sciences, however,

[1] From *Ashanti Proverbs*, pp. 133–4.

[2] I am doubtful, however, if the phonograph will prove to be a good medium for reproducing drum sound-waves. I find that Ashanti drummers are able to read records with ease only if they have themselves made them. In other cases they find much difficulty.

hold the key which alone can unlock the secrets of the Ashanti Drum Language, which, without their help, must always have remained an obscure and little-understood art. It is therefore appropriate that I should here acknowledge the great debt I owe to the late Rev. J. G. Christaller, a German student and missionary, who was the first, many years ago, to draw attention to ' tones ' in the Ashanti language.[1] It is owing to his wonderfully painstaking researches into the phonetics of this language that I am able to draw upon material which he collected in his *Ashanti Grammar*, and thus to produce the necessary scientific evidence to prove that the explanation of the Ashanti Drum Language is afforded by the fact that Ashanti is a tonic language. To say that Ashanti is a ' tonic ' language is not, I am afraid, to make the matter much clearer to those unfamiliar with tones, and it will be necessary to go into the matter in some little detail if what is here recorded is fully to be understood.

We are all familiar, I think, with the use of tones in our own language, where they are chiefly employed as a means of oratorical or emotional expression, or to give to a word or sentence a shade of meaning which that word or sentence would lack if merely written down in print, or spoken without that musical intonation, which alone raises words from the plane of merely conventional articulatory sounds. This use of tone in languages with which we are familiar is, however, really only known to us as being a useful adjunct by which shades of meaning may be imparted to a certain word, or, if it be used in a sentence, we may be prepared for some additional grammatical phrase. Examples will make my meaning clearer. ' Yes ' and ' no ' are capable of a variety of meanings according to the intonation, running, from the accepted dictionary meaning of an affirmative and a negative, through a whole gamut of sense-modifications until almost verging into an undecided negative and a credulous positive, respectively. Leaving words and coming to sentences, we find again that we are considerably dependent on tone for

[1] These tones had already been noted in Ewe by the German missionary Schlegel and by Professor Westermark, and yet another German scholar had noted them in a language of the Cameroons, all being localities in which the drum language is known to exist. I am also much indebted to a remarkable book by Carl Meinhof, *An Introduction to the Study of African Languages*, made available for the use of English students by Miss Werner's scholarly translation ; and to the late Sir Edward Tylor's classic, *Primitive Culture*.

our preparation in thought of what is to follow, or for our perception that what has been said closes a particular sentence; thus 'I am going', spoken with a falling inflexion, makes us accept the statement as being more or less complete, but if we make a rising inflexion on the last word, our ear has immediately prepared us for something to follow, which is possibly a clause in adversative or copulative co-ordination, i. e. a 'but' or an 'and' clause to follow.

It is perhaps natural, therefore, when we talk of Ashanti as being 'a language of tones' or a 'tonic' language, that we should suppose it to use the tones which have just been described in the sense and manner with which we are familiar. When it is stated, however, that this is far from being the case, and that the tones just referred to do not exist in Ashanti, I think we shall begin to realize that we are here 'up against' something which is new to many of us.

In Ashanti, every syllable, in every word, has assigned to it a more or less arbitrary tone or musical pitch. These tones do not depend upon the will or caprice of the speaker, and are not employed for emotional, oratorical, or grammatical purposes, but are an important element in the language upon which depends the correct and intelligible pronunciation of a particular word; not only is this so, but the alteration of tone in two words otherwise spelled exactly alike may change—not, as in English, the shade of meaning of that particular word—but, as noted presently, will alter the actual 'dictionary' meaning.

To give an exaggerated example, it is very much as if the word 'box' in English had two tones, one rising, one falling, and that 'box' with the rising tone meant 'box', but 'box' with the falling tone meant 'cow'.

A list of Ashanti words will presently be given in which this alteration in the tone of a syllable is shown to alter the meaning of the word entirely. Before we pass on to an examination of tones in Ashanti, however, it is necessary to discuss some other important factors which in addition to 'tones' go to make up the elements of any spoken language. All these have, some in a greater, others in a lesser degree, a direct bearing upon the subject now under examination.

These remaining factors are : (*a*) Accent, on a particular syllable. (*b*) Stress or Emphasis, on a particular word. (*c*) Gesture (of hands, arms, or feet). (*d*) Facial gesture. (*e*) Pauses, stops, or punctuation. (*f*) Duration of words or sentences, i. e. speed at which they are spoken.

We find all these in our own language, and with one exception all are also to be noted in Ashanti. Just as it was found, however, that though tones are common to both English and Ashanti, they are in each language made to serve a fundamentally different purpose, so with some of the above-mentioned factors important distinctions exist in the rules which govern their application. I shall take ' accent ' first, meaning by this term the accentuation of a particular syllable in a word (as distinct from ' stress ' or ' emphasis ' which is here used of words).

If, under this heading, we consider our own language, we shall find, I think, that accent is the most important factor in deciding the correct pronunciation of a word. This is not so in Ashanti, concerning which it has just been written that tones are ' an element in the language upon which depends the correct and intelligible pronunciation of a word '. Accentuation of syllables is found in Ashanti, but is of lesser importance ; moreover, it is dependent on and governed by totally different causes. In our own language accentuation of syllables seems chiefly to depend on the etymology of a word, the accent being placed on the root or stem, e. g. excèptionable. In Ashanti the accent is generally dependent, as will be seen later, on the succeeding tone. In other words we have a cause which is phonetic as opposed to one which is etymological.

Yet another example, showing how in our own language accent largely takes upon itself the functions of ' tones ' in Ashanti, is to be seen in those English words in which accent alters a word's meaning—just as we have seen ' tone ' doing in Ashanti—e. g. ' áccent ' the noun, ' accént ' the verb, ' prótest ' the noun, ' protést ' the verb. This use of accent is unknown to Ashanti.

Stress or Emphasis on a particular word in a sentence. In our language we have yet another kind of accent, which, to distinguish it from the last, I have called ' stress ' or ' emphasis '. It is laid upon a particular word in a sentence. ' I am going to-morrow ' may be emphasized in four different ways,

according as the speaker wishes to lay stress upon the ' I ', the ' am ', the ' going ', or the ' to-morrow '.

This form of accent, I believe, will be found non-existent in Ashanti, for this reason. Accent, as stated, being dependent in Ashanti on tone; if we alter it, we are altering the tone, and so are making a word either unintelligible or else so completely altering its meaning as to make the sentence nonsensical.[1] The place of emphasis is, I think, taken in Ashanti by the loudness with which a word is spoken, and this at once carries us by a natural step to our next headings, (*c*) and (*d*), which are ' gesture ', by the use of the hands, arms, or facial muscles. As we all know, the African is a past master in the use of gesticulations, though his gestures are not very varied, and if watched for some time become monotonous. It may at first sight appear totally irrelevant to the subject of drum-talking to touch upon this adjunct of the spoken language, for it may be argued that it cannot possibly find a place in the former means of communication. Nevertheless, I think it is one of the factors which, indirectly at any rate, contributes to this attempted approximation to human speech. Gesture, the waving of the arms, the bringing down of the hands with a bang, &c., are really movements synchronized with the voice, the latter being but the vocal representation or echo of the former. Thus gesture may be indirectly reproduced in drumming by the loudness or softness with which the drum is beaten. (I shall go presently into more detail as to how all these elements here described are reproduced upon the drum.)

The next heading (*e*) is ' Stops ' or ' Pauses ', corresponding to ' punctuation ' in speech. On a careful analysis of any of the phonograph cylinders it will at once strike the listener that the whole series is divided into groups of tones, with clearly defined stops at varying intervals. These exactly correspond with our punctuation marks in writing or our pauses in speech. I have

[1] If this hypothesis be correct, then if followed to its logical conclusion it would appear that when we set a *libretto* in Ashanti to a European *score* we must jumble the whole sense of the words and render them either meaningless or ridiculous. I have been informed by Africans that this is really the case, and that when children sing songs in schools in their own language set to our music, what they sing is unintelligible to the outsider, and is often to the singers themselves ridiculous.

noted that these group periods form one of the important aids which help a drummer to pick up a message.

Speed. (*f*) Its use is quite obvious and need not here be enlarged upon. Tones, accent, stress, loudness, (ĝesture) periods or stops, and speed have now all been briefly examined in turn. These elements, when combined and reproduced upon drums, in the manner to be described presently, create, by the combined rhythm, musical intonation, and melody, something which gives us a form of music which is almost capable of being classed as a language or, in other words, is looked upon, heard, and understood, by those familiar with it, as being only a modification of their own spoken tongue.

It is now proposed to pass on to a more detailed description of tones and accent in Ashanti. While it is not within the scope of this chapter to go farther than to draw attention to some of the more important rules (for a minuter study of the subject students should consult Christaller's *Grammar*), it is nevertheless absolutely necessary for an understanding of this chapter to know at least the elements of this subject. It will be dealt with under two main headings :

1. Tone { (*a*) in nouns ; (*b*) in verbs.
2. Accent.

Various methods have been employed in the past, in writing, to designate tones. That used by Christaller consists of numbers, thus : (1) low ; (2) middle[1] ; (3) high. Accents might also be used, acute, high ; grave, low.

I have here introduced yet a third method as being applicable to the present subject. This consists in marking low tones M, and high tones F, these letters standing for the ' male ' drum and the ' female ' drum respectively, upon which these tones are produced.

Tone of nouns. The first rule, which is of fairly general

[1] It will be noted that middle tones are not represented. I have not been able to discover if drummers employ more than two tones. It seems to me quite possible that by hitting different parts of the same drum different ranges in tone may be produced ; but if they do this, they do so unconsciously as they tell me they employ only the two tones. The force with which a drum is hit may also possibly modify the tone.

application, is that in nouns having a monosyllabic stem the noun prefix O, A, M, E, or Am (with their variations) is generally low and the root or stem high.

Examples: *O-su*, rain; *O-de*, yam; *O-wu*, death; *A-ni*, eye; *A-no*, mouth; *M-pa*, mat; *N-su*, water; *N-sa*, hand.

The next division of nouns is into those:

A, beginning with a low tone.
B, beginning with a high tone.

Class A may again be subdivided into:

1. Those with a low tone throughout all their syllables, which may range in number from 1 to 5 or more.

Examples: *O-po*, the sea (an exception to our rule 1) *A-dam-fo*, a friend; *Kon-trom-fi* (the 'trom' is made on the drum by bringing down both sticks almost but not quite simultaneously, in such cases mm, or ff, or mf is used to designate this).

(2) Stems with a low tone, with the last syllable a high tone:

e.g. *A-ko-a* (a slave); *A-ber-e-wa* (an old woman); *A-kye-re-kye-re-kwan*, the forefinger.

3. Stems with low, high, and low tones[1] (or with low, high, middle, the last being here taken as low):

e.g. *O-bar-i-ma*, a male; *O-hi-a-ni*, a poor man.

Class B. *Stems beginning with a high tone*

1. Those with high tone throughout:

e.g. *Ko-ko-ni-ni*, a cock.

2. Stems with high and low tones:

e.g. *kae*, remembrance; *Kon-tom-po-ni*, a liar.

These rules only touch upon the very fringe of the subject,

[1] Most diminutives ending in *wa* have such tones, and also diminutives ending in *a*, and nouns ending in long *e* or *i* or in diphthongs.

and deal with nouns when standing alone and unconnected.[1] When prefixes are dropped and the noun connected with succeeding words all kinds of changes occur; high tones become low and low high, but these changes cannot here be discussed.

Tones in verbs. The tones in the simplest unconnected form of the monosyllabic verb *ba*, to come, will be given in the different tenses. In the connected form these tones may and probably will differ—low tones after high becoming low, and low tones before high becoming high.

m f
O-ba, he comes.
m f
Wa-ba, he has come.
m m f
O-re-ba, he is coming.
m m m f
O-re-be-ba, he is about to come.
mm
Ber-a, come.
f ff
Ommera, he may come.
m f
Ommma, he may not come.

Before this extremely brief and sketchy account of a most difficult subject is closed, a list of words will be given showing how a change of tone in a syllable may, as has already been noted, alter the dictionary meaning of a word.

m f f
O-so-re, he prays.
m m f
O-so-re, he rises up.
m m m
O-wa-re, he is tall.
m m f
O-wa-re, he marries.
m m
O-pam, he sews.
m f
O-pam, he drives away.

[1] As will be seen later in the discussion upon the holophrase, this is in practice a rare occurrence, so much so that I am very much inclined to doubt the use of learning such rules which when learned seem in practice only to be broken. But here they serve a useful purpose as examples.

m f
O-do, he ploughs.
m m
O-do, he loves.
m mf
O-kra, he bids farewell.
m fm
O-kra, cat.

2. *Accent.* The rules governing accent are less complicated than those regulating tones ; the English student of the language will certainly have much less difficulty in mastering them ; the reason, as we have seen, being that he is here on old familiar ground, whereas the whole system underlying the use of tones is absolutely foreign to anything he has ever conceived or heard of in his own language.

Only three rules will be given :

1. In verbs the accent depends on changes of tone.

2. In nouns the accent is on the first syllable having a high tone, or on the low-toned syllable immediately preceding it.

3. In nouns with low tones throughout, the first syllable usually carries the accent. In other words, as has already been noted, accent, in Ashanti, is dependent on tone and not on etymology.

The next question to be examined is the manner in which these various elements, tone, accent, gesture, loudness or softness, number of syllables, pauses and stops, are actually put into practice in drumming and the possibilities and limitations in their application.

Tone. The nature of vowel sounds is well known, and these have actually been defined as 'musical tones'—all know how important they are in singing. Ashanti abounds in vowel sounds ; there are no less than ten principal vowels, and as these may be long or short, pure or nasal, their number becomes very great. The language, therefore, should be an ideal one in which to sing and drum.

Granted, then, that a vowel is a musical tone, and dividing tones broadly into 'high' and 'low', we have at once, on two drums, one with a low, the other with a high tone, a possible, if somewhat rough-and-ready, way of reproducing vowel sounds.

But besides vowel sounds, whatever number a language may contain, consonants must also exist to hang these vowels upon. For a long time I could not see that there was any possibility of reproducing on the drums, sounds approximating to consonants. When we come to examine Ashanti talking-drums themselves, it will be noticed that a small piece of iron called *akasa* lies on the tympanum of the male drum, to which it is sometimes attached. This bit of iron jingles and gives rise to a harsh discordant note, which runs intermittently through the more musical tones with which it mingles. I have repeatedly asked drummers why they used this bit of iron, and the answer always is, that the drums will not ' speak well ' without it. Its very name, *akasa*, means literally ' the little speaker '. I believe that this discordant and harsher note, very roughly approximates to consonantal sounds, which the drum seeks to reproduce as being essential to speech. The drum ' does not talk well without it ', the Ashanti drummer says, and at the present stage of these investigations we must leave it at that, but the point is one well worth noting for future scientific investigation. Thus far I have tried to show that, broadly speaking, vowels with low tones or high tones, or any combination of these, may be reproduced on our two drums, together with a jarring note contributed by the *akasa* which, possibly, suggests the sounds of consonants. Next, there is obviously not any difficulty about reproducing the correct number of syllables in a word or in any group of words; e.g. we have this sentence in Ashanti: *A-ko-ko bon a-no-pa*, where there are seven syllables; putting in the tones we have the following scheme: Low, high, high, low, low, low, low, or writing according to the method suggested,

m f f m m m m

A-ko-ko bon a-no-pa. The next element we have to impart is the correct accent; this is easily done; in fact the drum-sticks, in hands which naturally in speaking have followed the accent, will almost unconsciously impart that accent to the correct syllables. Thus the fourth syllable, *bon*, in the example just given will be slightly accented, and also the last but one, *no*. Next come the punctuation and stops. First of all there is an extremely slight pause between each syllable, and a slightly longer one after each word. These can easily be

reproduced accurately by the drummers. The next point is, I believe, very important in connexion with the drum language. It may be summed up in the statement that I believe there are still indications that Ashanti is or has been a holophrastic language, as perhaps all unwritten languages tend to be. Examples will make my meaning clear. A student in this language, who is working with a native teacher, must have been struck with the latter's apparent inability at times to grasp what is said or meant, when instead of a sentence, a single word—a noun, an adjective, or verb root—is taken out of a sentence and spoken alone. The student may seem to pronounce the word absolutely correctly, but so far from imparting any meaning to his listener he might as well be speaking a word in some foreign language. If the same word is now taken and put into a sentence or phrase, the native teacher will at once seem to hear and understand it. That is, the Ashanti does not readily grasp the sounds of words as isolated parts of speech (as we have learned to do), but only takes cognizance of them when they become part of a phrase or sentence which he hears, as it were, as a familiar combination of sounds, which, when broken up and isolated into component parts or sounds, he has difficulty in recognizing. To learn to write would seem to be the solution of this difficulty, for it is only among the illiterate that I have noticed this peculiarity. The writing down separately parts of speech, and grammatical analysis, can alone give words their own individuality. Among peoples who know nothing of writing or grammar, a word *per se*, cut out from its sound group, seems almost to cease to be an intelligible sound. Another reason for this inability to understand separate words may possibly be that the tones of words as part of the sentence and as standing alone or unconnected are, as has been noted, generally different. Both causes are perhaps contributary to this phenomenon which undoubtedly exists. This peculiarity of the holophrase supplies, I believe, yet another factor which helps out the drums in their attempted approximation to human speech. The drummer is not so much concerned with the individual letters or syllables—he knows nothing of either—but he hears a musical phrase, as it were, in which, if he misses a note here and there, i. e. a syllable, the context which he would have

grasped, assists him in deciphering the whole. This recognized linguistic melody which he hears is composed of sounds and stops approximating to :

1. High and low vowel sounds.
2. Consonants.
3. The exact number of required syllables.

The whole is punctuated and accented as accurately as can be done in print. Granted, then, that Ashanti has tones, and granted that tones, accent, loudness, softness, stops, &c., in a sentence all go towards the production of a kind of linguistic music, then in any particular holophrase we have as it were a bar or bars of music.

If we hear a bar of music repeated we soon become familiar with it, and in an exactly similar manner do these Ashanti drummers become familiar with the common phrases and ' set pieces ' which form the *répertoire* of the drummers' stock-in-trade, and very soon even to a foreigner who has learned these pieces the drums begin to ' talk '.

I have now described—imperfectly and inadequately, the elements of a subject which must be left to scholars versed in phonetics to pursue—the secret of drum-talking, compared with which our own Morse code is simplicity itself. I think it has never been recognized properly how wonderful and how worthy of encouragement the drum language really is. This has been chiefly because the principles upon which it is based were misunderstood, and even when recognized seem strange and foreign to most of us, and also because we have not realized what good purpose it served. It is only by a process of synthesis, such as has been adopted in this chapter, that we begin to realize that an untaught African people have grasped and adapted elements in the science of phonetics, in producing a useful means of intercommunication and of practical utility in their daily life ; it has helped also, as will be seen presently, to preserve the records and traditions of their past, and to foster racial pride in the present and future generations. Ashanti drumming should therefore inspire respect and gratitude ; we ought, I believe, to encourage, if only by a word of recognition and praise to its exponents, an art which must otherwise soon die out, taking with it much of the past history of this people.

The Scope and Limitations of the Drum Language.

It is proposed first to discuss the probable range of the drum language. One never ceases to hear wonderful accounts of how this or that item of news has been conveyed over immense tracts of this Continent by means of drums.

Some months ago I read in the papers how a resident in one part of Africa heard of the death, in another part of the Continent, of a European baby, and how this news was carried by means of drums, which were used, it was stated, on ' the Morse principle '. Other items of news of an interesting, if of a less domestic, nature, e.g. that recorded in the beginning of this chapter, are also often reported. In the Cameroons, and elsewhere than Ashanti, a different system may possibly prevail, and the scope of the drum language be greatly enlarged. As I have heard exactly similar unsubstantiated stories in Ashanti, I doubt whether many of these accounts would survive critical investigation.

The explanation of many of these legends possibly lies no deeper than in the story of an intercepted or belated delivery of a telegraphic message by a native postal official.

How often in the little village in Scotland in which I was brought up, have I had the news I was later to receive as the contents of a telegram related to me by one of the villagers—and we have no drum language in Galloway !

The first limitation I would place on the drum language is determined not by distance but by language. Given a uniform linguistic area, stretching uninterruptedly for one hundred, one thousand, or more, miles, there is not any theoretical or practical reason—provided this area has a sufficiently dense population—why a drum message should not be sent from one end of that country to the other, and this, in the time that sound will travel, plus a period allowed for retransmission at different receiving and dispatching points, and other incidental delays. A barrier, however, would seem to be immediately interposed when we come to a new linguistic area. This barrier may or may not be insurmountable. If this area (1) also possesses a tonic language, (2) has possibly a drum language of its own, and (3) possesses a drummer who is bilingual, and so able

to receive the message and to retransmit it in the new (but still 'tonic') language, then theoretically no real check need exist.

When the language is one that is not a tonic language, however, e.g. one of the Bantu [1] or Hamitic groups, we come upon a check that we must assume would probably prevent the retransmission of a message, and so bring the range of transmission to an end. I am afraid, therefore, that any transcontinental system of the drum language must, with our present knowledge, be considered impracticable. Even with this reservation, however, there is no reason that messages should not be drummed across Ashanti, a distance of some two hundred miles from east to west, as rapidly or more so than we could send a telegraphic communication. The whole of the Ashanti fighting resources could be called up—and be in readiness in different centres—from one end of this country to the other, a few hours after a declaration of war, the summons being contained in the following message :

M m f m m m f f f m m f, which, put into human speech,
m m f m m m f f f m m f
sounds and reads, *A-san-te ko-to-ko, mo n-ka n-to-a*, a message which almost every Ashanti man and woman would understand.[2]

On the other hand it might, both theoretically and in practice, be impossible to transmit a message, say, between Kratchi and Salaga, a distance, as the crow flies, of only about fifty miles, because at Salaga we have a different linguistic area.

Coming next to the scope of the drum language, meaning by that term the limitations, if any, in the nature of messages, we are on much more difficult ground, and my investigations on this subject are not yet complete. Theoretically, the expert drummer should not experience any limitations as to what he can drum, and possibly he does not; but, and this appears to be the crux of the whole question, his limitations are very real when it comes to the 'reading' of a message. Any one who

[1] Since I wrote the above my attention has been called to recent linguistic analyses carried out at the Phonetic Department of University College, London. It would appear that some, at least of the Bantu languages, are being found to be tonic.

[2] Sometimes elaborated into '*Korobia yerefi anwoma Asante Kotoko monka ntoa*', i.e. 'Ashanti Porcupines (who) came from Korobia's womb, seize (lit. touch) your powder belts!'

has ever learned to helio, or semaphore, or signal with flags will readily understand this. It is always easier to transmit than to receive a message. The difficulty, i.e. that of receiving or 'reading' a drum message, must of necessity be very considerable. The drum only gives the tones, number of syllables, and the punctuation accurately. The actual vowels and the individual consonants cannot be transmitted. It is therefore generally impossible to 'read' accurately any particular word when standing alone, because a combination of, say, a low and a high tone, i.e. a word of two syllables, might be common to a dozen words each of which was made up of a low and a high tone, and containing two syllables, but each of which had a different meaning; when such an isolated word—or, in this context, simple combination of two tones—comes to take its place in a phrase or sentence, the combination of tones becomes more complex, and we have thus a series which will be much less likely to be found combined in another phrase having a different meaning; thus the chance of confusion is somewhat reduced, and when it is stated that the *répertoire* of Ashanti drummers consists of certain holophrases which are in constant use by all drummers, it will be readily understood that they become absolutely familiar with these. Should a drummer depart, however, from one of these 'set pieces' and strike out on his own, drumming at fancy, new phrases, i.e. new combinations of tones, &c., then, though to himself the drum would still continue to speak, yet another drummer, who heard these new combinations for the first time, could not, I am convinced, read his message with any accuracy. That is, sender and receiver have to be familiar with the phrases drummed. Thus, though the possibilities are almost unlimited in theory, they are limited as practised in Ashanti.

A drummer's stock-in-trade consists of a series of holophrases dealing with all the important subjects which he would be likely to find of practical utility; these include:

1. The calling up of any particular chief by name.
2. Notice of danger, an enemy, fire, &c.
3. Death of a noted individual.
4. Approach of Europeans.
5. Summons to take up arms on declaration of war.

6. And, perhaps most important of all, from our point of view, the pieces drummed at the festivals known as *Adae*,[1] which constitute a complete drum-history of the particular clan. An example of such a history is given in this chapter.

There are in Ashanti at least two kinds of drums that ' talk '. The more important of the two, and those which with we are here concerned, are the *ntumpane*.

The other, the *fontomfrom*, are of quite a different shape from the *ntumpane*, and are used in a different way, each drum being beaten by its own drummer, in a kind of duet. The *fontomfrom* drums are used exclusively, I am told, to drum proverbs.

The *ntumpane* are the talking drums of the Ashanti *par excellence* ; Fig. 101 illustrates a pair, ' male ' and ' female '.

Before we enter upon a detailed description of these drums, an account of how they are made, and the ceremonial inseparable from their manufacture, will be of interest. When an Ashanti chief wants a couple of *ntumpane* or talking drums he will summon the makers (who are not the drummers), and are variously known as *'kyerema nyano* (the drummer's *nyano*) or *atwenesenfo* (i. e. carvers of the *tweneboa* tree). Only chiefs of the rank of *omanhene*, *ohene*, or *safohene* have the right to possess such drums. A Queen Mother or other women may not possess a drum. The makers are given the order and at the same time are presented with a fowl,[2] some rum, and gold dust ; after which they set off to the forest to look for a suitable tree. This must be a tree called variously *tweneboa* or *tweneduru* (a species of cedar ?) ; this tree is regarded as particularly powerful and malignant, its *sunsum* (spirit) being *nye kora*, ' not at all good '. The Ashanti say its wood consists of a mixture of many kinds of wood found in other trees. Having chosen the tree, the workers set about protecting themselves as far as possible from the dangers that now threaten them. First of all an egg is broken by being thrown against the trunk, and the following words are spoken :

' *Me re be twa wo m'asen wo, gye 'kesua yi di, ma me ntumi ntwa wo, me nsen, mma dadie ntwa me, mma me nyare.*'

[1] See Chaps. V–IX.

[2] A particular kind of fowl (*asense*) is always associated with drums : it is the fowl with the curly feathers.

'I am coming to cut you down and carve you, receive this egg and eat, let me be able to cut you and carve you, do not let the iron cut me, do not let me suffer in health.'

The rum is poured over the tree which is then cut down. The fowl is next killed and some of the flesh placed upon the tree stump. The log is hollowed out in the forest. When this work is completed, rum and an egg are again offered, with the words :

'*Ye de wo re ko 'fie o, ma 'fie nye yiye.*'

'We are going to take you to the village, let the village prosper.'

When the log is brought to the village, yet another offering is made of a fowl and rum, with the words :

'*Gye akoko ne nsa yi di, ye de wo aba yi, ma 'kuro yi nye yiye, mma ye mfa wo nye ayie.*'

'Partake of this fowl and wine, now that we have brought you, let the village prosper, do not let us have to take you to a funeral.'

There still remains to complete the drumming outfit :

1. The tense membrane.
2. The pegs.
3. The rope for binding the skin over the pegs.
4. The drum-sticks.
5. The two legs or supports.
6. The piece of iron to be fastened on the male drum.
7. The drum's cloth or dress.
8. The hammer for knocking in the pegs.

1. The tense membrane. For the *ntumpane* drums this is invariably made out of the skin of an elephant's ear, preferably a female, the hairy side being outermost. The skin is cut slightly larger than the size required to cover the mouth of the drum, and then bound on like a jam-pot cover. The edge of the skin is then turned up all round and through this is laced the creeper or rope (*bofunu*), *vide* A on next page. By hammering in or loosening the pegs, the skin is tightened or relaxed, and it is by this ingenious method that the drums are tuned up to the desired pitch. The pegs are called *nsoa* and are made from the tree *ofema*, as are the drum-sticks and supports. They are

held in the sockets by the strain on the ropes, which are themselves tightened by hammering in the pegs. The rope is made from the fibre of a tree called *bofunu.*

The drum-sticks (*nkonta* or *ntwinta*). Two are used, one held in each hand; B shows the shape. They are made from a

naturally shaped branch of a tree called *ofema* (*Microdesmis puberula*). The handles are either bound with cloth or wrapped round with *funtumia* rubber to keep the hands from slipping. A drummer always carries several spare drum-sticks.

The supports (*nyawa*). These serve a double purpose, taking the place of two pegs and also supporting the drums at the

angle at which they are used; they are made of *ofema* wood (*vide* photograph).

The iron attachment (*akasa*), *vide* c. The purpose of this has been described. It is fastened so as to lie below the centre on the tense membrane of the 'male' drum, to which it is sometimes attached by piercing a hole in the skin, sometimes by being held in its position by a piece of hide or creeper passed through the two small holes in the centre of the *akasa* and fastened on to two pegs at each side of the drum. In shape it is exactly like a pea-pod open down one side, and this resemblance is further enhanced by its having two little pieces of iron between the two halves of the 'husk' which lie just like peas in its shell. Three iron rings are suspended from each end of it.

The cloth for an *ntumpane* drum must be a white cloth (*nwira*) (that of the *fontomfrom* is silk). The chief presents the drummer with the cloth and he tears off a small strip and fastens it round the drum with the words:

'*Ntumpane! ntama ni o, me re fura wo ntama ma w'ama me anya ohempa m'adi, w'ama me anya nkwa.*'

'Drum! here is a cloth, I am dressing you with it that you may grant that I may have a prosperous reign, and let me be blessed with good health.'

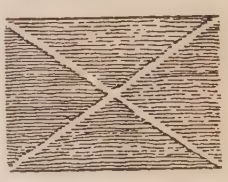
The hammer. This is often a small elephant's tusk. It is generally hung on the right side of the 'female' drum in readiness for use if required. This completes the drumming outfit, but the drums are not yet ready, for before they may be employed with impunity they have to be 'consecrated'. This fact was brought vividly to my notice in the following manner:

Chief Nuama of Coomassie had very kindly made for me a small new pair of 'talking drums'—such as drummers use to learn upon. The old drummer, by name Osai Kojo,[1] who appears in Fig. 101, came to my bungalow to instruct me in his art, but as soon as he had examined the drums he said he could not drum upon them as they were not ready. In the first place, he pointed out that the drums had no 'eyes', and secondly, that apparently they had never, since they left the workman's hand, had any offering made to them. I asked him if he would

[1] It was he who drummed the phonograph records.

perform the necessary ceremony, which he willingly consented to do, and this is what was done :

He first cut a small square on the surface at the left hand side of the 'male' and another on the right hand side of the 'female' drum, with two diagonal lines thus : (*vide* A on p. 260). These he said were 'the eyes of the drums', and also marked the spot upon which to place any offering. He next asked for two eggs and some whisky. First he poured a few drops of the spirit on the rim of each drum, with the words :



'*Tweneboa Kodia ! gye nsa nom, se ye ka wo a mma yenyare.*'

'O Cedar tree Kodia ! receive this wine and drink, and when we sound you do not let us fall ill.'

Next he slapped down an egg upon the eye of the male drum, saying :

'*Tweneboa Kodia ! ye wura na wa ko sene wo de wo aba se ode wo re be sua ka, na wo tweneboa nso, ye nfa yen nsa mmo wo mu kwa, na ode fufuo mienu na ode re ma wo adidie, yen a ye re kyere no yi, se ye kyere no a, ma no hu ka. Mma no nyare, mma yenso nyare. Ma yiye ntoa yiye, se oko Aburokyiri a, onko hu papa, ma Omanhene nso nhu papa.*'

'Cedar tree Kodia, our master went and had you made and brought (here) that he might take you to learn to drum ; and as for you, O Cedar tree; we do not use our hands to beat you without propitiation, so he has provided two white ones (i. e. eggs) and given you to eat, and we who are instructing him, when we teach him, permit him to know how to drum. Do not let him fall ill, do not let us fall ill either ; let good succeed good. When he goes to Europe may he see good, may the *Omanhene* also see good.'

The broken egg-shell, yolk, and white were rubbed as hard as he could over the 'eye', and then the other egg was broken and smeared over the 'eye' of the female drum with the words :

'*Gye 'kesua yi di.*' 'Accept this egg and eat.'

A fowl, he said, should also be given to the drummer, and this request was also complied with. My drums were now ready for

any emergency. Talking drums when placed in position have the male on the left, the female on the right, the drums touching or nearly so. If the drummer is left-handed, this position is reversed (see Fig. 102). The drummer stands behind them, as seen in the photographs.

Before I pass on to the drum-history which closes this chapter, a few notes on drummers and drum etiquette in general may be of interest. All Ashanti drummers are known as *Odomankoma 'kyerema*, lit. the Creator's drummers, or, making an adjectival phrase, 'the divine drummers'. The Ashanti have a myth which states that the Creator made a herald (*osene*), a drummer (*okyerema*), and an executioner (*obrafo*), and the precedence of these officials in an Ashanti Court is in that order.[1] Among their other duties drummers are supposed to keep the house of the chief's wives in repair.

A drummer must on no account carry his own drums, 'lest he should become mad'. Women should not touch a drum and are not allowed to carry them. A drummer should not teach his own son his art, but engage some other drummer to do so. Should a father teach his own son, it is thought the former would die as soon as the latter had become proficient. Talking drums have their own special room in the chief's house (*ntumpane 'dan*). The *ntumpane* drums are supposed to observe their owner's *ntoro* taboos.[2] Besides these, the *ntumpane* are supposed to taboo most rigidly:

(*a*) Blood in any form.[3]
(*b*) Menstruating women.
(*c*) Jaw-bones or skulls.

Ntumpane drums are carried behind a chief[4]; when he sits down to receive his courtiers, their position is behind him. On every occasion upon which a drummer is about to drum for the first time on a particular day, the following little ceremony takes place. Some wine or other spirit is brought in a cup,

[1] Horn blowers and drummers are of equal rank.
[2] *Vide* Chapter II on '*Ntoro* Exogamous Divisions'.
[3] The *fontomfrom* drums mentioned do not taboo blood. When a fowl is killed for the *ntumpane*, it is killed in front of them and great care taken that blood should not touch the drums.
[4] Except a drum called 'Prempeh' which is carried in front; it is not a talking drum.

and the drummer, bending over his drums, pours a few drops upon the edges and addresses them as follows :

'*Tweneboa Kodia, Kodia Tweneduru, gye nsa nom. Obofunu, gye nsa nom. Ofema dunsene, Gyaanadu Asare nsoa, gye nsa nom. Ofema dunsene, Gyaanadu Asare ntwinta, gye nsa nom. Esono obu akuma, gye nsa nom. Kokokyinaka Asamoa, gye nsa nom. Obayifo, gye nsa nom. Asase, gye nsa nom. Onyankopon Tweaduampon Bonyame, gye nsa nom.*'

'Cedar tree Kodia, Kodia Cedar tree, accept (this) wine and drink. Obofunu rope, accept (this) wine and drink. Stump of the Ofema tree, Gyaanadu Asare, the Pegs, accept (this) wine and drink. Drum-sticks made of the Ofema tree (whose title is) Gyaanadu Asare, accept (this) wine and drink. Elephant who breaks the axe, accept (this) wine and drink. Kokokyinaka bird (whose title is Asamoa), accept (this) wine and drink. Witch, accept (this) wine and drink. Earth deity, accept (this) wine and drink. Supreme Being Nyankopon Tweaduampon Creator, accept (this) wine and drink.'

This completes such information as has to date been obtained concerning the drum language, the drummers, and their drums, and the chapter will be closed with a drum-history of the Mampon division of Ashanti. An interpretation of this is given and also the key which will enable any one interested to try to drum it for himself.

An English translation is also given and a few very brief notes on points of anthropological interest.

I am very greatly indebted to an Ashanti chief, Osai Bonsu, *Omanhene* of Mampon, for permitting his drummer to drum this complete history into a phonograph,[1] and for allowing his drummers to lay completely bare, for the first time I believe, to a European, the secrets of their art. It may not be generally recognized that such a history has a deeply sacred significance. The names of dead kings are not to be spoken lightly, and with the recounting of such a history comes no small sadness to the listener.

I trust these phonograph records may prove to be of some

[1] Fig. 101 will show how the records were made. This photograph was taken in the open but the records were made in a room.

value, though they very possibly contain a number of mistakes.[1] They were made with considerable difficulty. The drummer was an old man, and the constant breaking in to have each stanza interpreted must have made his task more difficult. He became very hoarse towards the end, and a little cough here and there breaks in upon his interpretation.[2]

The translation into English is somewhat marred owing to the addition, to the names of each chief, of his titles or 'strong names' (*mmerane* is the Ashanti word). Many of these appear to be archaic, and no one now seems able to interpret them; so they have had to be retained and rendered in the vernacular.

It is not proposed in this chapter to analyse minutely the interesting and valuable material contained in this drum-history, but special attention may be directed to the following points:

Before the serious business of drumming the names of the chiefs begins, the spirits of the various materials, which have gone towards the making of the composite drum, are each propitiated in turn, and these spirits are summoned to enter for a while that material which was once a portion of their habitation. The drums thus, for a time, become the abode of the spirits of forest trees and of the 'mighty elephant'. The deities of Earth and of Sky are called upon in like manner. Even the hated and dreaded witches (*abayifo*), who prey upon the human body and gnaw the vitals and hearts of men (just as humans partake of meat and other food), are not forgotten, lest in anger they might seize upon the drummer's wrists and cause him to make mistakes.

A drummer who falters and 'speaks' a wrong word is liable to a fine of a sheep, and if persistently at fault he might, in the past, have had an ear cut off. The constant allusion to 'the stone that wears down the axe' carries us back, I believe, to the neolithic age in their culture, of which we have examples to-day in the celts and grooved rocks which abound in Ashanti. The weapons, offensive and defensive, with which this people once fought have their names preserved, though the weapons themselves are no longer to be found in use, or even known to the majority.

[1] A few have been noted and corrected in this chapter.
[2] In seven cylinders.

An interesting allusion is made to one of the *ntoro* divisions, Lake Bosomtwe,[1] described elsewhere, which corroborates what was therein recorded, i. e. the offering of a white fowl to the Lake spirit.

When we come to the names of the rulers of this clan (the Beretuo), a close examination reveals the fact that the first sovereign of this division was a woman—a fact of great interest when the position of women under their system of matrilineal descent is examined.[2]

Finally, in this drum-history has been preserved an accurate record of the migrations of this clan from the far-away days when the Mampons were settled in Adanse, and also the names, deeds, and physical attributes of their former rulers.

This history is first given in the drum language itself, by writing down the tones; M, for a beat upon the 'male' drum, F, for one upon the 'female', MF, FM, MM, or FF, for almost, but not quite, simultaneous beats upon either drum in the order named. These tones are grouped in syllables by being linked with a hyphen, e. g. M-F-F for *a-ko-ko*, &c. The various holophrases each have a separate line.

No attempt has been made to accent the syllables.

History of Mampon in the Drum Language. (Cylinder No. 1)	*Drum-History of Mampon transposed to the Ashanti Language.*
I	I
M M M M,	*Kon, kon, kon, kon,*
F F F F,	*Kun, kun, kun, kun,*
F-F-F M-M-M,	*Funtumi Akore,*
M-M-F-F M-M-M,	*Tweneboa Akore,*
M-M-F-F F-M-F,	*Tweneboa Kodia,*
F-M-F M-M-F-F,	*Kodia Tweneduru,*
M-F-F-F-F F-M-F M,	*Odomankoma 'Kyerema se,*
M-M M-F M,	*Oko babi a,*
M F M-F F-F F,	*Wa ma ne-ho mene so,*
M-F-F M M-M-M,	*Akoko bon anopa,*

[1] *Vide* '*Ntoro* Exogamous Divisions', Chap. II.
[2] *Vide* 'Matrilineal Descent in Ashanti', Chap. III.

M-F-F MF M,	*Akoko tua bon,*
M-F-F F-F F-F,	*Nhima hima hima.*
M M M-F F,	*Ye re kyere wo,*
F-F F F F,	*Nso wo be hu,*
M M M-F F,	*Ye re kyere wo,*
F-F F F F.	*Nso wo be hu.*

II	II
M-M-F F-F-F-F,	*Asase damirifa,*
M-M-F F-F-F-F,	*Asase damirifa,*
M-M-F F M M-F-M-F,	*Asase ne no mfuturu,*
M-M-F-M-M,	*Kyereduampon,*
M-F F M-F-F,	*Oko ka Kwawuo,*
M-M-F M M M F M,	*Asase me re be wu a,*
M M M,	*Me dan wo,*
M-M-F M M M-F M,	*Asase me te ase a,*
M M M,	*Me dan wo,*
M-M-F M M-F M-F-F,	*Asase a odi afunu,*
M-F-F-F-F F-M-F M,	*Odomankoma 'Kyerema se,*
M-M M-F M,	*Oko babi a,*
M F M-F F-F F MF,	*Wa ma ne-ho mene so oo,*
M F M-F F-F F,	*Wa ma ne-ho mene so.*
M-F-F M M-M-M,	*Akoko bon anopa,*
M-F-F MF M,	*Akoko tua bon,*
M-F-F F-F F-F.	*Nhima hima hima.*
M M M-F F,	*Ye re kyere wo,*
F-F F F F,	*Nso wo be hu,*
F M M-F F,	*Ye re kyere wo,*
F-F F F F.	*Nso wo be hu.*

III	III
M-M-M M-F-F-F-F,	*Yerefi Ankamanefo,*
M F M-M-M-F F F,	*O ne Akyerema be ko,*
M-M-M M-F-F-F-F,	*Yerefi Ankamanefo,*
M F M-M-M-F MM,	*O ne Akyerema bae,*
F-F-F-F-F MF-M-F M-M,	*Kuntunmirifa Gyaanadu koko,*
M-M-M-F M-M F-F,	*Ampatakyi mene 'sono,*
M-F-F M-F M-M-F,	*Esono obu akuma,*

M-F-F M-F-F-F-F F-M-F M,	*Esono, Odomankoma 'Kyerema se,*
M-M-M,	*Osunna,*
M F M-F F-F F,	*Wa ma ne-ho mene so,*
M-F-F M M-M-M,	*Akoko bon anopa,*
M-F-F MF M,	*Akoko tua bon,*
M-F-F F-F F-F,	*Nhima hima hima,*
M M M-F F,	*Ye re kyere wo,*
F-F F F F.	*Nso wo be hu,*
M M M-F F,	*Ye re kyere wo,*
F-F F F F.	*Nso wo be hu.*

(Cylinder No. 2)

IV	IV
M-M-F-F M-M-M-M,	*Obofunu Ampasakyi,*
F M FF,	*Wo wo he?*
M-F-F-F-F F-M-F M,	*Odomankoma 'Kyerema se,*
M-M M-F M,	*Oko babi a,*
M F M-F F-F F MF,	*Wa ma ne-ho mene so oo,*
M F M-F F-F F,	*Wa ma ne-ho mene so,*
M-F-F M M-M-M,	*Akoko bon anopa,*
M-F-F MF M,	*Akoko tua bon,*
M-F-F F-F F-F,	*Nhima hima hima.*
M M M-F F,	*Ye re kyere wo,*
F-F F F F,	*Nso wo be hu,*
M M M-F F,	*Ye re kyere wo,*
F-F F F F.	*Nso wo be hu,*

V	V
M-F-F F-F-F,	*Ofema dunsene,*
MF-M-F M-M-M M-MF,	*Gyaanadu Asare nsoa,*
F M FF,	*Wo wo he?*
M-F-F-F-F F-M-F M,	*Odomankoma 'Kyerema se,*
M M M-F M,	*Oko babi a,*
M F M-F F-F F MF,	*Wa ma ne-ho mene so oo,*
M F M-F F-F F,	*Wa ma ne-ho mene so.*
M-F-F M M-M-M,	*Akoko bon anopa,*
M-F-F MF M,	*Akoko tua bon,*

M-F-F F-F F-F,	*Nhima hima hima.*
M M M-F F,	*Ye re kyere wo,*
F-F F F F.	*Nso wo be hu,*
	Ye re kyere wo,
	Nso wo be hu.

VI	VI
M-F-F M-M-F-F-F M-M-MF,	*Aboa Kokokyinaka Asamoa,*
M M M FF F,	*Ye gye wo die ben?*
M M M M-FM-M,	*Ye gye wo Anyado,*
M M M M-M-F F,	*Ye gyĕ wo 'Kyerema 'ba,*
F-M-F F F M-F M-M-M,	*'Kyerema 'ba da, nyane anopa,*
F-F F-F F-F,	*Tu tu tu tu tu tu.*
M M M-F F,	*Ye re kyere wo,*
F-F F F F,	*Nso wo be hu,*
M M M-F F,	*Ye re kyere wo,*
F-F F F F.	*Nso wo be hu.*

VII	VII
M-M-M-FF M-M F M-F,	*Obayifo, nkum me Adwo,*
MF M M-F,	*Gyaa me Adwo,*
M-F-F-F-F F-M-F M,	*Odomankoma 'kyerema se,*
M-M-F M-M-F M,	*Osore anopa a,*
M F FM M M-M-M,	*Obe yan wo anopa,*
F-F F-F F-F,	*Tu tu, tu tu tu tu.*
M-M-M-FF M-FM M-M-M-F-F,	*Obayifo okum apiripuru,*
M-M-M-FF M-FM M-M-M-F-F,	*Obayifo okum apiripuru,*
M-F-F-F-F F-M-F M,	*Odomankoma 'Kyerema se,*
M-M-F M-M-F M,	*Osore anopa a,*
M F FM M M-M-M,	*Obe yan wo anopa,*
F-F F-F F-F	*Tu tu, tu tu, tu tu.*
M M M-F F,	*Ye re kyere wo,*
F-F F F F.	*Nso wo be hu.*

(Cylinder No. 3)

VIII	VIII
M-FF-F M-F M-M-M,	*Asiama Toku Asare,*
M-FF-FM-M M M-FF,	*Otweaduampon 'bo 'Nyame,*

M-M-F-F M-F M-M-M-MF,	*Opontenten Asi Akatabaa,*
M-FF-F MM-MF-M,	*Asiama Nyankopon,*
M-F-F-F-F F-M-F M,	*Odomankoma 'Kyerema se,*
M-M M-F M,	*Oko babi a,*
M F M-F F-F F MF,	*Wa ma ne-ho mene so oo,*
M F M-F F-F F,	*Wa ma ne-ho mene so,*
M-F-F M M-M-M,	*Akoko bon anopa,*
M-F-F MF M,	*Akoko tua bon,*
M-F-F F-F F-F,	*Nhima hima hima.*
M M M-F F,	*Ye re kyere wo,*
F-F F F F.	*Nso wo be hu.*

IX

IX

FM-M M-F-F MM-FM,	*Boafo Anwoma Kwakyie,*
MM-F F-F,	*Kwakyi Panyin,*
MM-F M-F M-M-M,	*Kwakyi Adu Asare,*
F M-M FF,	*Wo firi he?*
F M-M M-MM M-M-F MF-M-M M-FF F M-M-F,	*Wo firi Mampon Kontonkyi, daamere obo hi akuma,*
M-MM M-M-F F-FM-M FM-M M-F-F MM-FM,	*Mampon Kontonkyi Aniampam Boafo Anwoma Kwakyi,*
MF,	*Kon!*
M-F M-M-FF M-M-M,	*Ogu akuro Firampon,*
F-F-F-F,	*Damirifa!*
F-F-F-F,	*Damirifa!*
F-F-F-F.	*Damirifa!*

X

X

M-FF F-F-M,	*Okyem adamfo,*
F F M FF,	*Ye mma no 'kyem,*
M-FF F-F-M,	*Okyem adamfo,*
F F M M-M-F,	*Ye mma no afona,*
M-FF M M F M FF,	*Okyem a ye ma no nam,*
MM-F F-F F,	*Nansa ara pe,*
M F M F MM-FF,	*Se è wa we 'beremo,*
M-F-F-F M-FM-FM,	*Obirempon Antiedue,*
M-FM-F M-F M-M-M,	*Antiedu Gyedu Asare,*
M-FM-F F-MF,	*Antiedu Kwatia,*

MF,	*Kon !*
M-FM-F F-MF F-M-M,	*Antiedu Kwatia Firampon,*
F-F-F-F,	*Damirifa !*
F-F-F-F,	*Damirifa !*
F-F-F-F.	*Damirifa !*

XI	XI
M-FF F M M-F-M-F,	*Okyem ne no mfuturu,*
M-M-M MF M-M,	*Gyirampon Agyai ne Ampam,*
M-M F-MF-F,	*Agyai Boaete,*
M-FM-M,	*Maniampon,*
M-F-F-MF M-M-MF,	*Okukuban 'Birempon,*
F M-M FF F,	*Wo firi he ni ?*
F M-M M-MM M-M-F MF-M-M M-FF F M-M-F.	*Wo firi Mampon Kontonkyi daamere obo hi akuma.*

(Cylinder No. 4)

XII	XII
M-F MM-M,	*Adu Boahen,*
MM-M M-F,	*Boahen Kojo,*
F M-M FF F,	*Wo firi he ni ?*
F M-M M-MM M-M-M-FF-F,	*Wo firi Mampon Akurofonso,*
MF-M-M M-F-F-F-F FM M-FF,	*Daamere Odomankoma bo adie.*
M-F MM-F M-F M-M-F M-F-M-M-MM-F.	*Adu Gyamfi twere twerebo Ani-ampafrako.*

XIII	XIII
M-F-F F FF,	*Onyunu ko dwoo,*
M-F M M-M-M,	*Kodwo me Sekyire,*
M-FF F-FF,	*Adie kokye,*
M-F M M-M-M,	*Kokye me Sekyire,*
M-M-M F-F F F,	*Sekyire 'hene ne huan ?*
M-M-M F-F F MF-M-F,	*Sekyire 'hene ne Kwaitu,*
MF-M MM M-MM-F F-F,	*Kwaaye nim Afrane Akwa,*
FM-F-F M-F-M-MF,	*Boatimpon Akuamoa,*
M-F-M-MF MM-F-FF,	*Akuamoa Dasebere,*
M-F-M-MF M F-F M-M,	*Akuamoa ye 'dehye dada,*

F M-M M-MM M-M-F MF-M-M M-FF F M-M-F,	*Wo firi Mampon Kontonkyi daamere obo hi akuma.*
MF,	*Kon !*
M-F-M-MF M-M-M,	*Akuamoa Firampon,*
F-F-F-F.	*Damirifa !*
F-F-F-F.	*Damirifa !*

XIV XIV

M-FM-F M-M-F-M-M,	*Otieku Amosoansan,*
M-M-M-F F-FF,	*Atakora Panyin,*
M-M-M-F F M-M FF F,	*Atakora wo firi he ni ?*
F M-M M-MM M-M-F MF-M-M M-FF F M-M-F,	*Wo firi Mampon Kontonkyi daamere obo hi akuma.*
MF,	*Kon !*
M-M-M-F M-M-M,	*Atakora Firampon,*
F-F-F-F.	*Damirifa !*

XV XV

MM F F-F F-F F-F F-F F-F MM F M,	*Kra hi gede gede gede gede gede kra hi ka,*
MM F M-M M-M M-M M-M M-M MM F M,	*Kra hi kata kata kata kata kata kra hi ka,*
MM F MM F MF,	*Kra hi kra hi kre,*
MM F MM F MF,	*Kra hi kra hi kre,*
M-F-F-F-F F M-FF,	*Odomankoma boo adie,*
M-MM FF F,	*Obo die ben ?*
M-MM FF,	*Obo 'Sen',*
M-MM F-M-F,	*Obo 'Kyerema,*
M-MM M-F-F-F MM-F M-F,	*Obo Kwawuakwa, 'Brafo tiri,*
F M-F M-F F M M-M M-M-M,	*Ye nyina nyina se ye firi tebena,*
F-M-F M-MF-M,	*Konimsi Amoagye,*
M-M-M-M M-MF-M,	*Gyaneampon Amoagye,*
M-M-M F-F-F M-MF-M,	*Esene Konini Amoagye,*
M-F-F MM F-F M F-MF,	*Esene, bra begye wo fokyee,*
M-M M FF F,	*Ogya wo die ben ?*
M-M M F-FF,	*Ogya wo kabuo,*
M-M M M-M-M-M,	*Ogya wo atopere,*
M-M-M-M M-M M-M-F,	*Gyaneampon Sakyi Amponsa,*
M-F-M-F M-M-MF,	*Asumgyima 'Birempon,*

MF,	*Kon !*
M-F-M-F M-M-M.	*Asumgyima Firampon,*
F-F-F-F,	*Damirifa !*
F-F-F-F,	*Damirifa !*
F-F-F-F,	*Damirifa !*
F-F-F-F,	*Damirifa !*
F-F-F-F,	*Damirifa !*
F-F-F-F,	*Damirifa !*
F-F-F-F.	*Damirifa !*

(Cylinder No. 5)

XVI	XVI
M-F-F F-FM,	*Osafo tenten e,*
M-F-F F-FM,	*Osafo tenten e,*
MM-F M-MF,	*Gyamfi Agyai,*
M-F-F MM-F M-M,	*Osafo Gyamfi Akwa,*
M-F-F M-M,	*Osafo Koko,*
M-MF M-F M,	*Osai Tutu 'ba,*
M-F-F MM-F M-MF F M-M FF F,	*Osafo Gyamfi Agyai wo firi he ni ?*
F M-M M-F-F M-FM-M-MM-M,	*Wo firi Kumase, Aduampa-frantwi.*
M-FF F-F-M M-FF,	*Okwan atware asuo,*
M-FF F-F-M FF,	*Asuo atware 'kwan,*
M-M-FF F F,	*Opanyin ne huan ?*
M MM FF M FM M-FF F,	*Ye bo 'kwan ko too asuo yi,*
M-FF F M-M M-M,	*Asuo yi firi tete,*
M-FF F M-M F-F-F-F M-FM M-FF,	*Asuo yi firi 'Domankoma oboo adie,*
MF,	*Kon !*
MM-F M-MF M-M-M,	*Gyamfi Agyai Firampon,*
F-F-F-F,	*Damirifa !*
F-F-F-F,	*Damirifa !*
F-F-F-F,	*Damirifa !*
F-F-F-F,	*Damirifa !*
F-F-F-F M-MF,	*Damirifa ! Osai,*
F-F-F-F M-MF,	*Damirifa ! Osai,*
F-F-F-F M-MF,	*Damirifa ! Osai,*
F-F-F-F M-MF.	*Damirifa ! Osai.*

XVII	XVII
M-FM-M MM-FF,	*Asiase Pepra,*
M-M-FF M-F M-FF,	*Okwawuo odi awuo,*
M-M-M-F MM-FF,	*Okyerema Pepra,*
F M FF F,	*Wo wo he ni?*
F M-M M-MM M-M-F MF-M-M M-FF F M-M-F,	*Wo firi Mampon Kontonkyi daamere obo hi akuma,*
FM-M F-F F-F F-F F-F F-F,	*Boafo ako, ako, ako, ako, ako.*
MM-FF M-M-M,	*Pepra Firampon,*
F-F-F-F,	*Damirifa!*
F-F-F-F,	*Damirifa!*
F-F-F-F.	*Damirifa!*

XVIII	XVIII
F F M F-F M,	*Ye nto wo 'Hene Kwa,*
F F M M-M-MF M,	*Ye nto wo 'Birempon Kwa,*
M-F-F M,	*Ohene Kwa,*
M-M-MF M,	*'Birempon Kwa,*
M-F-F F F,	*Ohene ne huan?*
M-F-F M-F M-M-F,	*Ohene fata 'wurade,*
M-M-MF M-F M-M-F,	*'Birempon fata 'wurade,*
F-F-FF F M-M-M-M F-FM-M,	*Yerefie ne Ampasakyi Aniampam,*
M-M-M-F M-F-M-FM,	*Atakora bedi-ako e,*
M-M-M-F FF FF,	*Atakora kron kron,*
M-M-M-F M-F M-M-M,	*Atakora Kwaku Firampon,*
F-F-F-F.	*Damirifa!*

XIX	XIX
M-M-M M-F-F-F M-FM F-F,	*Yerefi Ankamafo Akyaw Wusu,*
M-FM M-M-MF,	*Akyaw 'Birempon,*
M-F-F M-FM M-F-F,	*Owusu oka akyiri,*
M-MF M-F M,	*Osai Tutu 'ba,*
M-F-F M-M-FM,	*Owusu Akwasi e,*
M-F-F M-M-M,	*Owusu Sekyire,*
M-F-F-F-F M-MF M-F M-M-MF,	*Onoborobo Osai Kojo'Birempon,*
M-MF M-F M.	*Osai Tutu 'ba.*

(Cylinder No. 6)

XX	XX
M-F-F F-FM,	*Osafo tenten e,*
M-F-F F-FM,	*Osafo tenten e,*
MM-F M-MF,	*Gyamfi Agyai,*
M-MF M-F M,	*Osai Tutu 'ba,*
F M-M M-MM M-M-F MF-M-M M-FF F M-M-F.	*Wo firi Mampon Kontonkyi daamere obo hi akuma.*

XXI	XXI
F F M F-F M,	*Ye nto wo 'Hene Kwa,*
F F M M-M-MF M,	*Ye nto wo 'Birempon Kwa.*
M-F-F M,	*Ohene 'Kwa,*
M-M-MF M,	*'Birempon Kwa,*
M-F-F F F,	*Ohene ne huan ?*
M-F-F F F,	*Ohene ne huan ?*
M-F-F M-F M-M-F,	*Ohene fata 'wurade,*
M-M-MF M-F M-M-F,	*'Birempon fata 'wurade,*
F-F-FF F M-M-M-M F-FM-M,	*Yerefie ne Ampasakyi Aniampam,*
M-M-M-F M-F-M-FM,	*Atakora bedi-ako e,*
M-M-M-F FF FF.	*Atakora kron kron.*

XXII	XXII
MM F F-F F-F F-F F-F MM F M,	*Kra hi gede gede gede gede kra hi ka,*
MM F M-M M-M M-M M-M MM F M,	*Kra hi gada gada gada gada kra hi ka,*
MM F F-F F-F F-F F-F MM F M,	*Kra hi gede gede gede gede kra hi ka,*
MM M M F,	*Kra ka ka hi,*
MM F M-M M-M M-M M-M	*Kra hi gada gada gada gada,*
MM M M F,	*Kra ka ka hi,*
M-M M-M MM M M F,	*Gada gada kra ka ka hi,*
MM F MM F MF MM F M,	*Kra hi kra hi kre kra hi ka,*
M M M F MM F MM M M F,	*Ka ka ka hi kra hi kra ka ka hi,*
M-M-M-M-FF MM-F MM-F,	*Opotopodie mienu, miensa,*
M-MM-MF F F F F,	*Okrupon be we ne he ?*

M-MM-MF F F F F,
M-FM-F M-MF-M,
M-MM F-F-FF,
M-F-F-F-F F-M-F,
M-M-FF-F MM-F M-F.

Okrupon be we ne ti,
Oboadu Gyabaa Antwi,
Gyaba Kotoguan,
Odomankoma 'Kyerema,
Okwawuakwa Brafo tiri.

XXIII

FM-M M-F,
FM-M M-FM-F-F,
FM-M M-F,
M-M-F M M F M M-M M F-F F,
M-M-M M-FF M,
MF-M-F M-MM-F,
M-F-F F-FF M-F M-M-F M-MM-F.

XXIII

Boafo Fosu,
Boafo Aduanwoma,
Boafo Badu,
Ofosu fa na ni a, ode ne 'yere kye,
Oduro panyin 'ba,
Kwaante Bosomtwe,
Akoko fufuo fata Akwesi Bosomtwe.

(Cylinder No. 7)

XXIV

F F M F-F M,
F F M M-M-MF M,
M-F-F M,
M-M-MF M,
M-F-F F F,
M-F-F M-F M-M-F,
M-M-MF M-F M-M-F,
F-F-FF F M-M-M-M F-FM-M,

M-M-M-F M-FM,
F M-M M-MM M-M-F M-MF-F.

XXIV

Ye nto wo 'Hene Kwa,
Ye nto wo 'Birempon Kwa,
Ohene Kwa,
'Birempon Kwa,
Ohene ne huan?
Ohene fata 'wurade,
'Birempon fata 'wurade,
Yerefie ne Ampasakyi Aniampam,
Atakora Kwaku,
Wo firi Mampon Kontonkyi Botaase.

XXV

M-FF F-F-F M-M-FM M-MF,
M-M-F MF M-F-F,
M-M-FM M-MF M-M FF F,
M-M-FM M-MF M-M M-MM M-M-F MF-M-M M-FF F M-M-F,

XXV

Ofie Banyin Agyepon Ntara,
Agyepon ka akyiri,
Agyepon Ntara firi he ni?
Agyepon Ntara firi Mampon Kontonkyi daamere obo hi akuma.

M-M-FM M-MF F M M-M-F,	*Agyepon Ntara wo ye katakyi*
F M M-F-F M-M.	*Wo ye 'barima dada.*

XXVI	XXVI
M-M-M-F M-F-M-FM,	*Atakoro bedi-ako e,*
F M-M FF F,	*Wo firi he ni?*
F M-M M-MM M-MF-F,	*Wo firi Mampon Botaase,*
M-M-M-F M M M F MM-F M,	*Atakoro ye re ko ko babi a,*
M M-F M F M,	*Ye keka ma wo te.*

XXVII	XXVII
M-FF M-FM,	*Apia Kusi-e,*
M-F M-FM-FF,	*Kusi Oboadum,*
M-FF M-F,	*Apia Kusi,*
F M M-M-F	*Wo ye katakyi*
F M M-F-F M-M,	*Wo ye 'barima dada,*
FM-M F-F F-F F-F.	*Boafo ako ako ako.*

XXVIII	XXVIII
M-M-M M-F-F-F M-FM F-F,	*Berefi Ankamafo Akyaw Wusu,*
M-F-F M-FM M-F-F,	*Owusu Oka akyiri,*
M-F-F M-M-M,	*Owusu Sekyire,*
F M-M M-MM M-M-F MF-M-M M-FF F M-M-F,	*Wo firi Mampon Kontonkyi daamere obo hi akuma.*
FM-M F-F F-F F-F F-F.	*Boafo ako ako ako ako.*

XXIX	XXIX
M-F-F-F-F M-MF M-FM,	*Onoborobo Osai Tutu-e,*
M-M M-F F-M M-F-F,	*Bonsu oko kyere ahene,*
M-MF M-F M-M-MF,	*Osai Tutu 'Birempon,*
F M M-M-F	*Wo ye katakyi,*
F M M-F-F M-M,	*Wo ye 'barima dada,*
M-FM M-FM M-M M M F F F M-F-F-F-F M-MF M-F,	*Nka menko a nka pe se ye re ko Onoborobo Osai Tutu,*
M-M-M-F M-FM FF F M-M-F F F,	*Okatakyi a ofua 'tuo ne afona be ko,*
M-M M-F F-M M-F-F,	*Bonsu oko kyere ahene,*
M-MF M-F M-M-MF.	*Osai Tutu 'Birempon.*

English Translation of the Drum-History of Mampon.

I [1]

Kon, kon, kon, kon,
Kun, kun, kun, kun,
(Spirit of) Funtumia Akore,
(Spirit of) Cedar tree, Akore,
Of Cedar tree, Kodia,
Of Kodia, the Cedar tree,
The divine Drummer announces that,
Had he gone elsewhere (in sleep),
He now has made himself to arise;
(As) the fowl crowed in the early dawn,
(As) the fowl uprose and crowed,
Very early, very early, very early.
We are addressing you,[2]
And you will understand;
We are addressing you,
And you will understand.

II

(Spirit of) Earth, sorrow is yours,
(Spirit of) Earth, woe is yours,
Earth with its dust,
(Spirit of) the Sky,
Who stretches to Kwawu [a locality on the Gold Coast],
Earth, if I am about to die,
It is upon you that I depend.
Earth, while I am yet alive,
It is upon you that I put my trust.
Earth who receives my body,
The divine drummer announces that,
Had he gone elsewhere (in sleep),
He has made himself to arise.
(As) the fowl crowed in the early dawn,
(As) the fowl uprose and crowed,
Very early, very early, very early.
We are addressing you,
And you will understand.
We are addressing you,
And you will understand.

III

(Spirit of) the mighty one, Ankamanefo,
He and the drummers will set out together,
(Spirit of) the mighty one, Ankamanefo,
He and the drummers will return together.
You of mighty bulk, Gyaanadu, the red one
The swamps swallow thee up oh Elephant,
Elephant that breaks the axe,

[1] Phonograph cylinder no. 1.

[2] *Kyere* is 'to show', 'to instruct', but here I think is used rather in the sense of 'to relate', 'to tell'.

(Spirit of) the Elephant, the divine drummer declares that,
He has started up from sleep,
He has made himself to arise;
(As) the fowl crowed in the early dawn,
(As) the fowl uprose and crowed,
Very early, very early, very early.
We are addressing you,
And you will understand;
We are addressing you,
And you will understand.

IV [1]

(Spirit of) the fibre, Ampasakyi,
Where art thou?
The divine drummer announces that,
Had he gone elsewhere (in sleep),
He has made himself to arise,
He has made himself to arise;
(As) the fowl crowed in the early dawn,
(As) the fowl uprose and crowed,
Very early, very early, very early.
We are addressing you,
And you will understand;
We are addressing you,
And you will understand.

V

Oh Pegs, (made from) the stump of the Ofema tree,
(Whose title is) Gyaanadu Asare,
Where is it that you are?
The divine drummer announces that,
Had he gone elsewhere (in sleep),
He has made himself to arise,
He has made himself to arise.
(As) the fowl crowed in the early dawn,
(As) the fowl uprose and crowed,
Very early, very early, very early.
We are addressing you,
And you will understand;
We are addressing you,
And you will understand.

VI

Kokokyinaka [2] bird,
How do we give answer to thy greeting?
We salute thee 'Anyado', [3]

[1] Phonograph cylinder no. 2.

[2] The *Kokokyinaka* is a beautiful dark blue bird that frequents the forest. Osai Kojo, the old drummer, brought me one which I had as a pet. Its call is not unlike the notes of the drums. It is every drummer's totem, they claim clanship with it and would not eat or kill it. Its call is something like *Kyo kyo kyo kyo ko kyini kyini kyini kyo kyini ka ka ka kyini kyini kyini kyina ka.* The Ashanti say it taught them to drum.

[3] *Anyado* is a salutation given to drummers and also to any one of the Bosompra *ntoro*. *Vide* 'Ntoro Exogamous Divisions', Chap. II.

We salute thee as the drummer's child,
The drummer's child sleeps,
He awakes with the dawn,
Very early, very early, very early.
We are addressing you,
And you will understand;
We are addressing you,
And you will understand.

VII

Oh Witch, do not slay me, Adwo,[1]
Spare me, Adwo,
The divine drummer declares that,
When he rises with the dawn,
He will sound (his drums) for you in the morning,
Very early,
Very early,
Very early,
Very early.
Oh Witch that slays the children of men before they are fully matured,
Oh Witch that slays the children of men before they are fully matured,
The divine drummer declares that,
When he rises with the dawn,
He will sound his drums for you in the morning.
Very early,
Very early,
Very early,
Very early,
We are addressing you,
And you will understand.

VIII[2]

(Spirit of) Asiama Toku Asare,[3]
Opontenten Asi Akatabaa [strong names],
Asiama (who came from) the God of the Sky,
Asiama of the Supreme Being,
The divine drummer declares that,
Had he gone elsewhere (in sleep),
He has made himself to arise,
He has made himself to arise.
(As) the fowl crowed in the early dawn,
(As) the fowl uprose and crowed,
Very early,
Very early,
Very early.
We are addressing you,
And you will understand.

[1] *Adwo;* a title of respect, given to chiefs, by women to their husbands, and children to their elders.

[2] Beginning of the third phonograph cylinder and commencement of historical record. The first seven stanzas that have now been given precede every drum 'piece'.

[3] Asiama Toku Asare was the first Queen Mother of the Beretuo clan; mythology has it that she descended from the sky on a chain. Her blackened stool is preserved and has the centre place of honour at the Adae ceremonies. She was the head of the Beretuo clan before they migrated to Mampon. She ruled over the clan at the village of Ahensan in Adanse.

IX

[Oh] Boafo Anwoma Kwakyie,
Kwakyi, the tall one,
Kwakyi Adu Asare,
Whence camest thou ?
Thou camest from Mampon-Kontonkyi, the place where the rock wears down the axe.
Mampon Kontonkyi Aniampam Boafo Anwoma Kwakyi,
Kon !
Who destroys towns, Firampon,
Alas !
Alas !
Alas !

X

Friend of the Shield,
We gave thee a Shield,
Friend of the Shield,
We gave thee an Afona (sword)
The Shield which we gave was so terrible,
That in just three days,
It devoured backbones.[1]
[Oh] Obirempon Antiedue,
Son of Antiedu Gyedu Asare,
Antiedu, the short one,
Kon !
Antiedu, the short one, Firampon,
Alas !
Alas !
Alas !

XI

Shield with its dust (of tramping feet),
Gyirampon Agai and Ampam,
Agai Boaete, Maniampon,
The dust of whose battle caused the little Kukuban to fall from its tree,
(Giving thee the strong name of) 'Kukuban 'Birempon',
Whence was it that thou camest ?
Thou camest from Mampon Kontonkyi, where the rock wears down the axe.

XII

[Oh] Adu Boahen,
Boahen Kojo,
Whence was it that thou camest ?
Thou camest from Mampon Akurofonso,
The place where the Creator made things.
Adu Gyamfi with an eye like flint, (whose title is) Ampafrako.

XIII

The Shadows were falling cool,
They fell cool for me at Sekyire.[2]
The day dawned,
It dawned for me at Sekyire,

[1] *Bremmo* is also the centre part of the framework of a shield—its backbone.

[2] Sekyire is the name given to the country comprising Mampon, Nsuta, Effiduase, Ejura, and Jamasi.

Who is Chief of Sekyire ?
The Chief of Sekyire is Kwaitu,
Kwaaye knows Afrane Akwa,
Boatimpon Akuamoa,
Akuamoa,[1] whom we even grow weary of thanking for his gifts,
Akuamoa, you were of the royal blood since long long ago,
Thou camest from Mampon Kontonkyi, where the rock wears away the axe.
Kon !
Akuamoa Firampon,
Alas !
Alas !

XIV

[Oh] Otieku Amosoansan,[2]
Atakora the elder,
Whence was it that thou camest ?
Thou camest from Mampon Kontonkyi, where the rock wears down the axe.
Kon !
Atakora, Firampon,
Alas ![3]

XV

Kra hi gede gede gede gede gede kra hi ka,
Kra hi kata kata kata kata kata kra hi ka,
Kra hi kra hi kre,
Kra hi kra hi kre,
The Creator made something,
What did he make ?
He made the Herald,
He made the Drummer,
He made Kwawuakwa, the Chief Executioner,
They all, they all, declare that they came from one Ate pod,[4]
Konimsi Amoagye,
Gyaneampon Amoagye,
Esene Konini Amoagye,
Come hither, oh Herald, and receive your black monkey skin cap.[5]
What was your heritage ?
Your heritage was a good master,
Your heritage was (the death dance), Atopere,
Gyaneampon Sakyi Amponsa,
Asumgyima 'Birempon,
Kon !
Asumgyima[6] Firampon,
Alas !
Alas !
Alas !
Alas !

[1] The sixth ruler of the Beretuo clan.

[2] The seventh ruler of the Beretuo clan Amosoansan (he who declares war and does not turn back).

[3] The last three lines are omitted in both the drums and the Ashanti translation, on the phonograph.

[4] *Tebena* : deriv. *ate*, plu. *nte* ; a kind of creeper of that name and *abena*, a husk or shell.

[5] The head-dress of a herald is a cap made from the skin of a Colobus monkey with a gold disc in front.

[6] Asumgyima, eighth ruler of the Beretuo clan, was the son of a herald called Amoagye.

Alas !
Alas !
Alas ! [1]

XVI [2]

Osafo, the tall one,
Osafo, the tall one,
Gyamfi Agyai,
Osafo Gyamfi Akwa,
Osafo the red,
The child of Osai Tutu,
Osafo Gyamfi Agyai, whence camest thou ?
Thou camest from Coomassie (whose title is) Aduampa-frantwi.
Oh Path thou crossest the River,
Oh River thou crossest the Path,
Which of you is the elder ?
We cut a Path, and it went and met the River,
This River came forth long long ago.
It came forth from the Creator of all things.
Kon !
Gyamfi Agyai Firampon,
Alas !
Alas !
Alas !
Alas !
Alas ! Osai [3]
Alas ! Osai,
Alas ! Osai,
Alas ! Osai.

XVII

[Oh] Asiase Pepra,[4]
Okwawuo, the slayer,
Drummer Pepra,[5]
Where art thou ?
Thou camest from Mampon Kontonkyi, where the rock wears down the axe,
Boafo who fought, fought, fought, fought, fought, fought.
Pepra Firampon,[6]
Alas !
Alas !
Alas !

XVIII

We salute thee as Chief, (with the title) Kwa,[7]
We salute thee as 'Birempon, (with the title) Kwa,
Chief, Kwa,

[1] The drums have seven *damirifa*, but the record ran out at the word *Amponsa* in the Ashanti translation. [2] Cylinder no. 5.

[3] Osafo's father was one Osai Fwidie. Osai is the title given to any one of the Bosomuru *ntoro*. The Ashanti translation in the record only contains one *damirifa*, the drums give eight, as above.

[4] Asiase Pepra was the tenth ruler of the Beretuo. *Odii awu* means lit. ' the murderer ' but here implies he slew his enemies. The present Omanhene of Mampon is often greeted by this title: *Odii awu mache*, lit. ' Slayer (of men), good morning '.

[5] Every one of the name ' Pepra ' has the sobriquet ' drummer ' whether he be a drummer or not.

[6] Pepra Firampon, omitted in error in both drum and Ashanti translation on the phonograph cylinder.

[7] *Kwa*, which is a title of honour and respect, is not to be confused with *kwa*, worthless.

'Birempon, Kwa,
Who is Chief ?
He is Chief who is worthy of the title ' master ',
He is 'Birempon who is worthy of the title ' master ',
Yerefie and Ampasakyi, man among men,
Atakora the hero,
Atakora the Royal of Royals.
Atakora Kwaku Firampon,[1]
Alas !

XIX

Yerefi Ankamafo Akyaw Wusu,
Akyaw 'Birempon,[2]
Owusu the last born,
Child of Osai Tutu,
Owusu Akwasi,
Owusu Sekyire,[3]
Onoborobo Osai Kojo 'Birempon,
Child of Osai Tutu.

XX [4]

Osafo [5] the tall,
Osafo the tall,
Gyamfi Agyai,
Child of Osai Tutu,
Thou camest from Mampon Kontonkyi, where the rock wears down the axe.

XXI

We salute thee as Chief (with the title) Kwa,
We salute thee as 'Birempon Kwa,
Chief Kwa,
'Birempon Kwa,
Who is Chief ?
Who is Chief ?
He is Chief who is worthy of the title of ' master '.
He is 'Birempon who is worthy of the title ' master '.
Yerefie and Ampasakyi, man among men,
Atakora [6] the hero.
Atakora, the Royal of Royals.[7]

XXII

Kra hi gede gede gede gede kra hi ka,
Kra hi gada gada gada gada kra hi ka,[8]
Kra hi gede gede gede gede kra hi ka,
Kra ka ka hi,
Kra hi gada gada gada gada,
Kra ka ka hi,
Gada gada kra ka ka hi,
Kra hi kra hi kre kra hi ka,

[1] This line is omitted in the phonograph cylinder both in the translation and the drumming.
[2] This line omitted in the phonograph cylinder and in the translation.
[3] The eleventh ruler of the Beretuo.
[4] Phonograph cylinder no. 6.
[5] The twelfth ruler of Mampon.
[6] Atakora fought against Gyaman now the French Ivory Coast.
[7] This line is in the drumming, but is omitted in the drummer's translation on the cylinder.
[8] The drummer Osai Kojo here became very hoarse and coughed, he was changed with another drummer who continued the translation, and he began all over again, so this *kra hi*, &c. is really duplicated.

Ka ka ka hi kra hi kra ka ka hi,
(Though the odds were) two or three Potopodie birds (to one) he fought,
What part will the Vulture eat?
The Vulture will eat the head,
Oboadu Gyabaa Antwi,[1]
Gyaba the man of great bulk,
The divine Drummer,
Okwawuakwa the Chief Executioner.

XXIII

Boafo Fosu,
Boafo Aduanwoma,
Boafo Badu,
Boafo Aduanwoma,
Ofosu, who in a fit of anger took his wife and gave her (to a slave),
Child of Oduro, the elder,
Kwaante Bosomtwe,
A white fowl is a fit offering for Lake Bosomtwe[2] (whose day of observance is a Sunday).

XXIV[3]

We salute thee a Chief (with the title) Kwa,
We salute thee a 'Birempon (with the title) Kwa,
Chief Kwa,
'Birempon Kwa,
Who is Chief?
He is Chief who is worthy to be called 'master',
He is 'Birempon who is worthy to be called 'master',
Yerefie and Ampasakyi, man among men,
Atakora Kwaku,[4]
Thou camest from Mampon Kontonkyi, from Botaase.[5]

XXV

Ofie Banyin Agyepon Ntara,[6]
Agyepon the last born,
Agyepon Ntara whence came he?
Agyepon Ntara came from Mampon Kontonkyi where the rock wears down the axe.
Agyepon Ntara, thou wert a hero,
Thou wert ever a man.

XXVI

Atakora[7] the warrior,
Whence camest thou?
Thou camest from Mampon Botaase,
Atakora, if we are going to fight anywhere,
We speak of it to thee.[8]

[1] Antwi Abunyawa was the thirteenth ruler of the Beretuo clan.
[2] *Vide* Chap. II.
[3] Seventh and last cylinder.
[4] In the phonograph the drummer made the very bad mistake of naming Kwame Gyima instead of Atakora Kwaku. The drumming was correct; Atakora was the sixteenth ruler.
[5] Botaase, an area in the town of Mampon.
[6] Seventeenth ruler of the Beretuo.
[7] Atakora Kwaku eighteenth ruler.
[8] Last two lines not in phonograph cylinder.

XXVII

Apia Kusi,[1]
Kusi Oboadum,
Apia Kusi,
Thou wert a hero,
Thou wert ever a man.
Boafo who fought, and fought, and fought.

XXVIII

Berefi Ankamafo Akyaw Wusu,
Owusu the last born,
Owusu Sekyire,[2]
Thou camest from Mampon Kontonkyi where the rock wears down the axe.[3]
Boafo who fought, and fought, and fought and fought.

XXIX

Onoborobo Osai Tutue,
Bonsu [4] who fought and seized Kings,
Osai Tutu 'Birempon,
Thou art a warrior,
Thou art ever a man,
(You whose motto is) 'Were I alone, I should go and fight', Onoborobo Osai Tutu,
The hero who holds a gun and a sword when he goes to battle,
Bonsu who fought and seized Kings,
Osai Tutu 'Birempon.[5]

[1] The nineteenth ruler of Mampon.
[2] The twentieth ruler of Mampon.
[3] This line not in phonograph cylinder in the translation.
[4] Osai Bonsu the present *Omanhene* of Mampon and twenty-first ruler of this clan.
[5] The translation in Ashanti of the whole of Stanza xxix is not in the cylinder, which contains only the drum version.

Note.—It may interest readers of this chapter to hear that since it was written, and since my return to Ashanti, Lt.-Gen. Sir Robert Baden-Powell has been in communication with me with reference to the possibility of making use of the African Drum Language by the Boy Scouts. His inquiry and very kind interest in the subject first suggested to me the possibility of adapting the Ashanti *ntumpane* drums for use with the Morse code, and some initial experiments have been carried out with fair success. The method employed has been to read the low tone of the 'male' drum as a dash, and the high tone of the 'female' drum as a dot. Lt.-Col. Meiklejohn, D.S.O., commanding the Gold Coast Regiment, is most kindly permitting his signalling officer further to test the possibilities of this idea. Such a method of invisible signalling may not have any practical value in serious military operations, though it would have one obvious advantage over helio, flag, or semaphore, in that sender and receiver do not require to be in uninterrupted range of vision, a great desideratum in dense forest or 'bush' country. This system would also have advantages over the Ashanti 'tone' system, in that there need be no limitation in the nature or number of the messages that can be transmitted *and received*. Mr. E. O. Rake, District Commissioner, Scoutmaster of the Mampon troop of Boy Scouts and I received and read various messages, of the nature of which we were not informed beforehand, drummed by an African Boy Scout who was familiar with Morse—the low and high tones, dashes and dots, carrying clearly through over a mile of the dense Ashanti forest.

XXIII

THE GOLDEN STOOL[1]

Recent events in Coomassie have once again brought into prominence 'the Golden Stool'. Misconceptions, if not total ignorance in the past, concerning this object have been the cause of at least one costly expedition, and I believe there is still much which requires to be examined and more fully understood in connexion with this symbol, the supposed desecration or destruction of which has thrown the Ashanti people into national mourning.[2]

During many years' residence in Ashanti, I have, like all officials, avoided any questions, direct or indirect, concerning this subject, not wishing to offend the susceptibilities of the Ashanti by discussing this somewhat delicate question, and I doubt whether any results would have been obtained had I done so.

It was only after the events of the last few days, when the words *Sika 'Gua* (Golden Stool) have been in every mouth, that I ventured to ask some of my friends among the Ashanti for its true history and anything else in connexion with the subject, the knowledge of which would help us to understand those deep feelings which have so clearly stirred this people, and have caused so many of us to pause and ponder over the underlying causes of their visible grief.

In the archives of the Government there may exist some account of what is about to be related. In the classics dealing with this part of Africa (Bosman, Bowdich, Ellis, Claridge, Reindorf), I cannot recollect ever having seen a description setting forth the supposed origin of the Golden Stool, and, for

[1] This chapter is a copy of a memorandum written a few days after the desecration of the Stool became known, and before the trial and sentencing of the culprits.

[2] In every town and village *ntwuma* or red clay is seen smeared in lines on the head and arm.

the reasons alluded to above, I was myself more or less ignorant of these facts.

The source of my present information is an old Ashanti of the ruling class, deeply versed in the lore and traditions of his race, whose ancestor was one of the Aşhanti kings.

It has been neither politic nor possible in the short time available to get complete confirmation of what is here reported, but I believe investigations, when instituted, will be found to corroborate most of what he has told me.[1]

A knowledge of the facts now recorded would possibly have prevented at least one Ashanti war, had its bearing on local feeling and Ashanti politics been fully grasped, and I believe it will also be of some help to us in the correct understanding and settlement of the present position.

The origin and significance of the Golden Stool.[2] There have been at least sixteen Kings [3] of Ashanti, beginning with Kwabia Amanfi. He was followed by Oti Akenten, who was in turn followed by Obiri Yeboa Manwu. The fourth known King of Ashanti was Osai Tutu,[4] the first king to make the Ashanti a great people, and this he achieved by means of the power of 'the Golden Stool' which came into being in his reign in the following manner.

At this time Coomassie was subject to Denkyira, whose king's name at that time was Ntim Gyakari, of the Agona *abusua* or clan. This king had a clansman called Agyei Frimpon, better known as Okomfo-Anotchi (i. e. Anotchi, the priest). This man is stated to have seduced one of the king's wives and to have fled for his life to the Obi [5] country. Here he made a study of 'fetish' medicine and became the greatest 'fetish' man the Ashanti have ever had. Anotchi returned to Ashanti, proceeding to Juaben, where at this time one Akrasi was on the Stool. Anotchi informed him that he had a special mission from

[1] Since the above was written, and since my return to Ashanti, I am in a position to state that the descriptions and facts as herein recorded are substantially accurate.

[2] The full title of the Golden Stool is *Sika 'Gua Kofi* (the Friday's Golden Stool) as it was on a Friday that the Stool is supposed to have come into being.

[3] Using the word King in the only sense in which it should be used in Ashanti, as referring to one of the Kings of Coomassie.

[4] Reindorf gives the date of Osai Tutu's reign as 1700–30.

[5] I have so far been unable to trace this place, but to this day in Ashanti any big fetish priest is called Obi Okomfo.

Fig. 103. The desecration of the Golden Stool. Kojo Danso before the tribunal

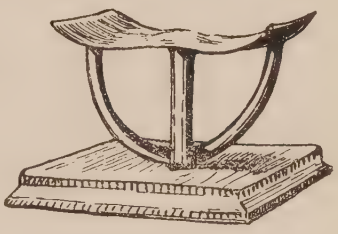
Fig. 104. The accused awaiting the verdict

Onyame, the God of the Sky, to make the Ashanti into a great and powerful nation.

Osai Tutu was informed, and a great gathering was held in Coomassie in the presence of the King and the Queen Mother, one Manu,[1] and the Chief of Kokofu, called Gyami, and the Kokofu Queen Mother, Ajua Pinaman, and many others.

Anotchi, in the presence of a huge multitude, with the help of his supernatural power, is stated to have brought down from the sky, in a black cloud, and amid rumblings, and in air thick with white dust, a wooden stool with three supports and partly covered with gold.[2]

This stool did not fall to earth but alighted slowly upon Osai Tutu's knees.[3] There were, according to some authorities, two brass bells on the stool when it first came from above; according to others, Anotchi caused Osai Tutu to have four bells made, two of gold and two of brass, and to hang one on each side of the stool.



Anotchi told Osai Tutu and all the people that this stool contained the *sunsum* (soul or spirit) of the Ashanti nation, and that their power, their health, their bravery, their welfare were in this stool. To emphasize this fact he caused the King and every Ashanti chief and all the Queen Mothers to take a few hairs from the head and pubes, and a piece of the nail from the forefinger. These were made into a powder and mixed with 'medicine', and some was drunk and some poured or smeared on the stool.[4] Anotchi told the Ashanti that if this stool was

[1] Manu shows she was one of two daughters born in succession. Many of these names I have verified from written histories.

[2] This rough sketch is made from an old *Abrammuo* or 'Ashanti Weight' which, I am informed, purports to be a model of the Golden Stool.

[3] The Golden Stool is supposed never to have touched the ground and it was never set in direct contact with it; on the rare occasions on which it was ever used, the skin off the back of an elephant was first placed on the ground; this was then covered with a cloth called *Nsa*, woven in the North, and something like what we call 'Kano cloth', and the stool was set upon this. As will be seen later the Golden Stool was never sat upon as ordinary stools are.

[4] To understand the full significance of this act one has to know that in the event of a person dying far from home, and it being impossible to remove the body for burial, some hair and nail parings are taken and brought home

taken or destroyed, then, just as a man sickens and dies whose *sunsum* during life has wandered away or has been injured by some other *sunsum*, so would the Ashanti nation sicken and lose its vitality and power.

This stool was never to be sat upon. It was not the ordinary stool of everyday or even ceremonial use. On very great occasions, if its power were to be invoked, the King of Ashanti would just make pretence to sit upon it three times, and would then seat himself upon his stool, resting his arm upon the Golden Stool.

When it was taken to Bantama once a year it was conveyed under its own umbrellas and surrounded by its attendants who in number and adornments surpassed those of the King who followed after it.

It was during Osai Tutu's reign that Coomassie threw off the yoke of Denkyira. When the King of Denkyira had sent his usual demand for annual tribute, and upon his messenger, Abebrese,[1] presenting his claim for a brass pan filled with gold dust and also the favourite wife and the favourite son of every Ashanti chief, the chief of Juaben is reported to have risen up and struck Abebrese on the face and then to have killed him. His blood was touched by the finger of every Ashanti chief present, and all swore to resist and fight the Denkyira. The armies met finally at Feyiase, not far from Coomassie, and owing to the power of the 'Golden Stool' the Denkyira were totally defeated. Their king, Ntim Gyakari, was said to have been found by the Ashanti (Coomassie) army sitting shackled with golden fetters and playing *wari* (a kind of draughts) with one of his wives. They were beheaded and the golden fetters—known all over Ashanti as the *sika dayanfo*—became part of the insignia on the Golden Stool.[2] Osai Tutu was succeeded by Opoku Ware, who in turn was followed by Kusi Boadum. He was succeeded by Osai Kwadwo, who was followed

to convey the *sunsum* of the deceased to look after the persons of its *ntoro* who are still alive.

The bells seen on many stools are for summoning the ghosts of the departed kings at the *Adae* ceremonies, which have been described elsewhere in this volume.

[1] The name Abebrese means lit. 'trouble'.

[2] Many Ashanti stools have fetters round the centre column. These are to fasten the souls of their owners to the stools.

by Osai Kwame. He was followed in turn by Opoku Fofie and Osai Bonsu. It was during Osai Bonsu's reign that important additions were made to the regalia or insignia attached to the Golden Stool. The King of Gyaman, called Adinkira, saw or heard of the Golden Stool of Coomassie and made one similar to it. This so enraged the King of Ashanti that he led an army against Adinkira and totally defeated that chief near Bontuku (now French Ivory Coast), and cutting off Adinkira's head caused that chief's golden stool to be melted down and cast into two masks representing Adinkira's face. These masks were hung one on each side of the Golden Stool.[1]

This event accounts for the mistaken report that one may occasionally hear, i.e. the Ashanti 'Golden Stool' came from Gyaman.

Osai Bonsu Panyin[2] was succeeded in turn by the following Ashanti Kings: Osai Yao; Kwaku Dua Panyin; Kakari (erroneously called Karikari); Mensa Bonsu; Kwaku Dua Kuma; Prempeh, 1888–95.

Each of these kings would add something to the Stool, but my informant does not know of any specially striking addition.

Coming now to the historic times, I wish briefly to touch upon two events, for an authentic record of which we are indebted to Dr. Claridge's *History*. The first is the expedition resulting in the banishment of Prempeh, the second Sir Frederic Hodgson's speech at Coomassie on the 28th March 1900. Of the former, I consider it worthy to record what I am informed is a piece of inner history on the Ashanti side that has never been told before. My informant reported that the submission of the Ashanti in 1896, after Prempeh's vain attempt to get into direct communication with the Home Government, and on receipt of the ultimatum from the Governor, was due to the fact that the Ashanti feared to take the Golden Stool to a war in which they felt certain they would suffer defeat. They decided therefore to make no opposition, deeming the loss of their king a trifle in comparison with the loss of their Golden Stool. It will be recollected that not a shot was fired on the

[1] Bowdich mentions this event; see p. 196 of his book.

[2] *Panyin* simply means 'elder', and *Kuma* 'younger'; he was later so called to distinguish him from Mensa Bonsu.

expedition and that the Ashanti calmly submitted to the banishment of their king. They still, however, retained the Golden Stool. Coming now to the events leading up to the 28th March 1900, and passing over the fruitless and futile search for the Golden Stool conducted with much gallantry, in the face of very real dangers, by Captain Armitage,[1] I will quote from Claridge's history what Sir Frederic Hodgson is reported to have said on that occasion :

' Now kings and chiefs, you have heard what the King of Bekwai has said upon the point I raised. What must I do to the man, whoever he is, who has failed to give to the Queen, who is the paramount power in this country, the stool to which she is entitled ?

Where is the Golden Stool ?

Why am I not *sitting* [2] on the Golden Stool at this moment ?

Why have you relegated me to this chair ?

Why did you not take the opportunity of my coming to Coomassie to bring the " Golden Stool ", and give it me *to sit* upon ? '

The historian relates that this speech ' was received in silence '. A few days later we were at war, which the Ashanti had declared on us.[3] Comment seems superfluous. The Ashanti were ' silent ', but every man left that meeting to go and prepare for war. I am sure if the Government of that day had ever known what is here very briefly described it would never have asked for the stool ' to sit upon ', and possibly it would not have asked for it at all, and there would have been no siege of Coomassie in 1900.

Our history shows not a few of such blunders retrieved—in part—by the gallantry of our men in the little wars which have sprung from these mistakes, mistakes made by high-principled men who felt sure they were acting for the best. Sir Frederic Hodgson apparently thought that the Golden Stool was just the ordinary stool of a King of Ashanti—the sign it is true of his kingship. But the Golden Stool was and is far more than that, it is the shrine of the *sunsum* or soul of this people, something

[1] Capt. Armitage, C.M.G., D.S.O., now Governor of the Gambia.

[2] The italics are mine.

[3] Lady Hodgson, in a book she wrote, has stated that her husband never said these words. The interpreter, however, so understood or misunderstood him, for this is how his speech was translated to the Ashanti.

for which they have fought and for which, I believe, they would fight again. There is still an aspect of the whole question which I would respectfully beg to submit for earnest consideration. I do not think we realize what a power, working for us, this stool has been, hidden away as it was; or that we fully grasp the results which I believe might follow were we ever to take it from this people. I believe it will be found to be the case that all the obedience, the respect, and great loyalty we have been given by the Ashanti is given through and by reason of the Golden Stool. I believe that, so far from benefiting, had we ever taken this stool—which would have been little more than a 'trophy' to us—that its power would then have worked against us. I go further and say that if it be true that this symbol of Ashanti nationality has now been lost or destroyed, that the results will soon be felt by us in a way we can hardly grasp. But I do not believe it to have been totally destroyed, and I think that once the Ashanti realize the wise policy that decrees that the stool is not to be asked for, that we shall know that much of it is still in being. I believe that once we are assured of this fact, that we have the key to the delicate situation which may possibly arise if the miscreants who desecrated the Golden Stool are found guilty and there is a demand for the death penalty, which the Ashanti law demands. For every Ashanti, man and woman, would understand the fairness of our plea for a mitigation of sentence of death to one of exile (to let them out in Ashanti would be to sign their death-warrant) on the ground that if the stool itself—i. e. the wooden foundation—is intact, then the *sunsum*, or soul, or power, or whatever we like to call it, has certainly *not* been destroyed.

XXIV

THE SILVER STOOL

The Queen Mothers and women of Ashanti presented to H.R.H. the Princess Mary, Viscountess Lascelles, on the occasion of her wedding, a silver stool which was a replica of that belonging to the late Queen Mother of Mampon.

A booklet, printed and bound by Africans in Accra, illustrated with photographs and written by the author of this volume, was presented to Princess Mary along with this gift. This contained the speech of Sewa Akoto, the late Queen Mother, which she made on presenting the stool for transmission to the Princess, and also a version, in a more condensed and less technical form, of what appears in Chapter III under the title of 'Matrilineal Descent in Ashanti'. The booklet also contained an account of the making and consecration of the stool.

The late Queen Mother's speech, the photographs, and the description of the rites in connexion with the making of the stool are republished here by the gracious permission of Princess Mary. The part dealing with the position of women in Ashanti is now omitted, as it would only be largely a repetition of what has been said in Chapter III.

The Queen Mother's Speech.

Translation

Lady Guggisberg, wife of His Excellency,

I place this stool in your hands. It is a gift on her wedding for the King's child, Princess Mary.

Ashanti stool-makers have carved it, and Ashanti silversmiths have embossed it.

All the Queen Mothers who dwell here in Ashanti have con-

Fig. 105. The scene outside the fort at Coomassie

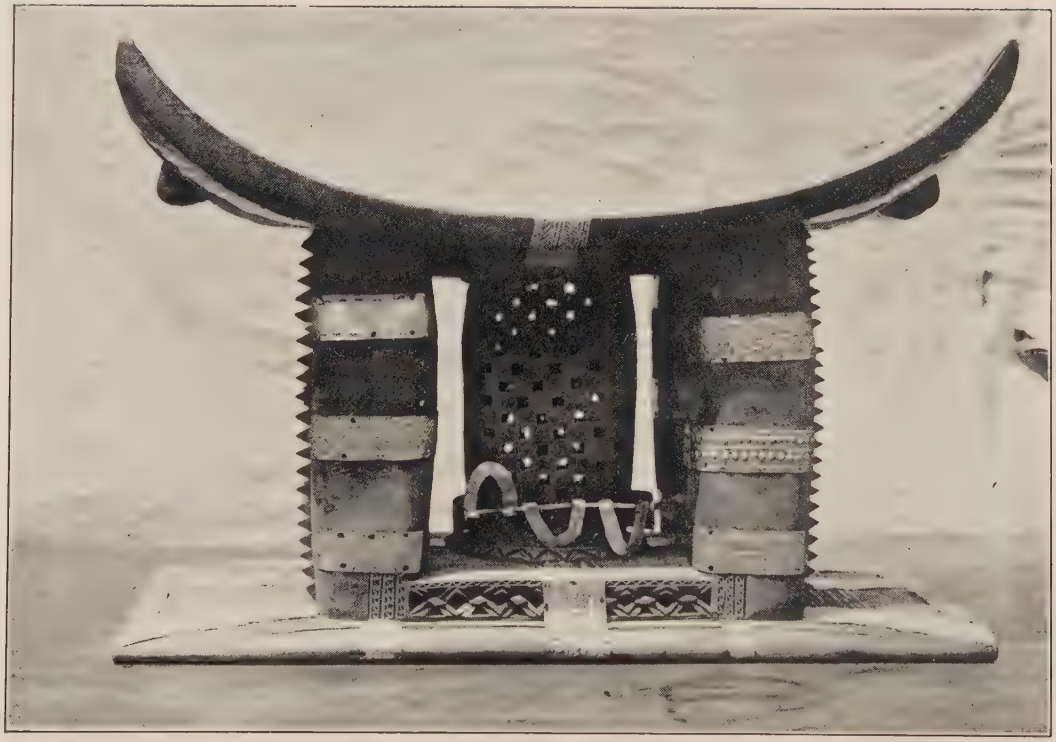


Fig. 106. The Silver Stool of the Queen Mother of Mampon

tributed towards it, and as I am the senior Queen Mother in Ashanti, I stand as representative of all the Queen Mothers and place it in your hands to send to the King's child (Princess Mary).

It may be that the King's child has heard of the Golden Stool of Ashanti. That is the stool which contains the soul of the Ashanti nation. All we women of Ashanti thank the Governor exceedingly because he has declared to us that the English will never again ask us to hand over that stool.

This stool we give gladly. It does not contain our soul as our Golden Stool does, but it contains all the love of us Queen Mothers and of our women. The spirit of this love we have bound to the stool with silver fetters just as we are accustomed to bind our own spirits to the base of our stools.

We in Ashanti here have a law which decrees that it is the daughters of a Queen who alone can transmit royal blood, and that the children of a king cannot be heirs to that stool. This law has given us women a power in this land so that we have a saying which runs :

'It is the woman who bears the man.'

(i.e., the king). We hear that her law is not so, nevertheless we have great joy in sending her our congratulations, and we pray the great God Nyankopon, on whom men lean and do not fall, whose day of worship is a Saturday, and whom the Ashanti serve just as she serves Him, that He may give the King's child and her husband long life and happiness, and finally, when she sits upon this silver stool, which the women of Ashanti have made for their white Queen Mother, may she call us to mind.

(Signed) Àmma Sewa Akoto.

X her mark.

Description of Princess Mary's 'Silver Stool'.

The Stool, subscribed to by the Queen Mothers and women of Ashanti and presented by Sewa Akoto of Mampon, the senior Queen Mother, for transmission to Princess Mary as a wedding

gift, is an exact replica of a Queen Mother's Silver Stool (see Fig. 106).

(Here followed the account of the position of women in Ashanti, for which the reader is referred to Chapter III.)

Such are the old women in Ashanti who have sent this gift to the daughter of our King.

'It does not contain our soul,' they say, 'but it contains our love.'

The description now given of the making of this stool applies equally to any stool; the following was the procedure adopted.

The stool-carvers were called before the Queen Mother and given an egg, a fowl, and some gold dust. They went to the forest and selected a suitable tree of the kind called *osese* (? *Funtumia sp.*). It exudes a latex—'tears', the natives say—when cut.

In the animistic creed of Ashanti everything in nature, animate or inanimate, has its *sunsum* (soul or spirit), and the *osese* tree is no exception. This spirit had therefore to be propitiated, equally to guard against harm resulting to the persons who cut down the tree, as to the person who will eventually sit upon the completed stool. The egg was taken and thrown against the tree trunk with the following words:

'*Osese gye 'kesua di, Aburokyire 'Hene 'ba a o re ko aware no, se o tena wo so a, ma no nyke, mma dade ntwa me.*'

'*Osese* tree, accept this egg and eat, and when the child of the English King sits upon you let her have long life. May the knife not cut me.'

The gold dust was placed at the foot of the tree; the fowl was killed and its blood sprinkled on the *osese*, and the tree was then cut down; the flesh of the fowl was placed on the stump; the log from which the stool was to be carved was then brought to the outskirts of the village, where a little temporary workshop was built; here the stool was carved. It will be noted it was cut out of one solid block. The designs both on the wood and on the silver plates are genuine old Ashanti patterns, which may be seen on ancient pottery, and on the *kuduo* or vessels which are used on the occasions when 'they purify their souls'.

The stool having been carved, and the silversmiths having done their part, it might seem to be ready for use; but this is not so, as was vividly brought to the writer's notice in the following manner:

The stool was temporarily in his custody, when it was sent for by the Queen Mother of Mampon. The girl who came to fetch it asked for a cloth to wrap it in 'as she had not bathed that morning' and could not touch it. It was taken down to the court-yard of the Queen Mother's house, and here the following ceremony took place:

The Consecration of the Stool. The Silver Stool was turned upside down and placed on top of a silk-covered cushion upon a low table. An old copy of the *Observer* was carefully wrapped round it. The Queen Mother's first-born daughter and the Queen Mother seated themselves on their stools. An egg upon a plate, some soot, a knife, and some short sticks were placed on a corner of the table in readiness (see Fig. 107). The Queen Mother then broke the egg, allowing the white to fall on the ground, the yolk into the plate. She then spoke as follows:

'*Osese gye 'kesua yi di, Aburokyire 'Hene 'ba a o re ko aware no, se o tena wo so a, ma no nkye.*'

'*Osese* tree, receive this egg and eat; concerning the child of the King of England who is getting married, if she sits upon you let her have long life.'

The daughter frayed out the ends of the sticks and mixed the yolk and the soot. When all was ready, she and her mother, looking up to the sky with hands uplifted, spoke the following prayer (see Fig. 108):

'*Onyankopon Tweaduampon, me wura Aburokyire 'Hene 'ba Mary a o re ko aware yi, me sere wo kyere ne amemoyam ma no, me de akonua yi bo no tenasie.*'

'Supreme Being on whom men lean and do not fall, concerning Mary, the child of my Lord the King of England who is getting married, I pray of you to give her long life and grace. I seat her upon this stool.'

These religious rites being completed, the Queen Mother produced out of a handkerchief 14*s.* in silver coins, and these she

grouped all around the hollow in the centre of the stool. This was the 'artist's' fee, and if not paid the woman who was about to draw the design (seen on the bottom of the stool) 'would run the risk of becoming blind'.

Amma Agyiman (the daughter) now began to paint on the mixture with one of the little sticks, beginning with the steps round the hollow centre of the stool. When this was done the design upon the bottom of the stool was next laboriously drawn, the Queen Mother from time to time suggesting or showing her daughter what to do (Fig. 109).

The stool was now complete and ready for the 'daughter of Kings' to sit upon.

The following day the stool was carried under an umbrella (an adjunct of royalty) to show to the paramount chief, Osai Bonsu of Mampon (Fig. 110).

An Ashanti stool is supposed to be the repository of its owner's soul, and for this reason the miniature fetters are placed round the central support of the stool—'to chain down the soul to it'.

A stool is subject to all the taboos of its owner. An Ashanti never leaves his or her stool standing upright when not occupied, but, on vacating it, tilts it against something or turns it on its side, lest some wandering spirit should sit upon it. The result of this would be felt sooner or later by the owner, who would suffer from pains in the small of the back or otherwise feel unwell.

Enough has been said to show that the Silver Stool is an object and symbol which inspires, and is accorded, all the honour and respect we should show, for example, to the colours of a regiment. The causes which govern this veneration in both cases have roots deep in the past, a past which we perhaps are less able to decipher clearly because it is more remote from us than it is from these Ashanti mothers.

In observances such as these, there is much to make us pause and hesitate before we decide upon their destruction.

I think that this Chapter would not be complete without adding the Princess Mary's gracious message to these mothers of Africa. It was as follows:

Fig. 107. The consecration of the Princess Mary's Silver Stool

Fig. 108. Supreme Being upon whom men lean and do not fall

Chesterfield House,
Mayfair, W. 1.
3rd November 1922.

Dear Lady Guggisberg,

I am desired by the Princess Mary to write and ask you to convey to the Queen Mothers and women of Ashanti the warmest thanks of Her Royal Highness for their beautiful Wedding Gift of the Silver Stool.

This wonderful tribute of loyalty and affection has touched the Princess very much indeed, and it was with feelings of the greatest sadness that she heard from your lips the distressing news of the death of the Queen Mother so soon after she had organized the Wedding Gift, and had written Her Royal Highness the touching address which accompanied it.

Princess Mary trusts that you will assure the Queen Mothers and women of Ashanti that she feels for them from the depths of her heart, and that she wishes to offer them all her sympathy. She fully realizes how much they must mourn such a great Queen Mother.

Believe me,
Yours sincerely,
(Signed) Dorothy Yorke,
Lady-in-Waiting.

XXV

ASHANTI GOLDSMITHS AND GOLD WEIGHTS, WITH A BRIEF NOTE ON *KUDUO*

THERE is a considerable literature dealing with the subject of Ashanti weights dating back to 1676 and ending, so far as I am aware, with an excellent article by Mr. N. W. Thomas in the 1921 journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute.

In the present chapter an attempt is made to deal with this interesting question from a practical standpoint, and to explain certain difficulties and misunderstandings that I believe still exist. It is certainly surprising, considering all that has been written concerning Ashanti weights, how very little seems known about them. There are valuable and learned articles in which attempts are made to prove or disprove theories with reference to the geometrical progressions involved and comparisons with similar casts in use in parts of Africa other than Ashanti; but I believe I am correct in stating that there are still some persons long resident in Ashanti, and even anthropologists at home, who express doubts as to whether Ashanti 'gold weights' can really be weights at all in the true sense. In other words, how can objects of such varied and intricate designs be used to weigh such a delicate and valuable medium as gold dust with any degree of accuracy? Moreover, the proverbial sayings which so many of these weights represent are also unknown.

The following notes will, I trust, make these matters clearer and at the same time draw further attention to the curious designs on some of the weights which I believe to be worthy of a closer study. These notes are the result of investigations made in the country where these castings are used. The small collection of weights photographed in Figs. 114–16 (the exact weights of each of which have been ascertained)[1] is, with a

[1] See Appendix A to this chapter.

Fig. 109. The Queen Mother showing her daughter what to do

Fig. 110. The Stool was carried under an umbrella

few exceptions, one in present use. The remainder of the photographs (Figs. 117–25) are made from my own collection.

The *adwumfo*, in the present context goldsmiths (*adwini* is any skilled work in gold, silver, or leather), were in ancient time an honoured class. All goldsmiths formed a sort of brotherhood, and any goldsmith had the privilege of calling a fellow-goldsmith's wife ' my wife ',[1] and they were privileged to wear gold ornaments, a form of personal adornment otherwise rigorously restricted to kings, their wives, and the greater chiefs. In the Bekwai administrative division of Ashanti all the goldsmiths trace their origin to one Fusu Kwebi, the first of their trade. The bellows and a few of the weights and tools of this now almost divine ancestor are still preserved, and along with his *obosom* (god), Ta Yao, have become the goldsmith's particular god (see Fig. 111). His cult has even extended beyond the goldsmiths' guild, and his god (one of Tano's many ' sons ') is now consulted by others who are not in the trade. The ancient bellows, now only a crumbling piece of wood with the skin long since rotted away, are resorted to by wives who are accused of unfaithfulness who wish to attest their innocence, by drinking wine that has been allowed to flow over this fragment.

The local Bekwai goldsmith informed me that he himself once plied his trade in the spirit world, ' as was ', he said, ' made manifest at his birth, by his having across the palm of his hand lines representing a pair of tongs (*da*) '. If any one committed adultery with a goldsmith's wife, the usual adultery fees would not only have to be paid, but also a special fine to cover the purification of his tools and stock-in-trade.

The goldsmith's art was retained in certain families. If a son did not follow the father's trade, then a nephew (sister's son) was compelled to do so. On the other hand, if the son followed his father's trade he had a right to inherit his father's gold weights and all his stock-in-trade to the exclusion of any member of his father's clan, unless some member of that clan, e. g. the nephew, was also a goldsmith, when he would have the prior claim.

A list of the common weights in use in Ashanti is given in Appendix A to this chapter. Each casting, irrespective of size,

[1] This privilege implies no right of access at the present day, whatever may have been the case in the past.

weight, and design, is called *abrammuo* (Christaller gives it as *abrammo*), plural *mrammuo*.

A goldsmith's collection of assorted weights, scales, shovel, spoons, &c., in fact all the paraphernalia of his stock-in-trade, which he carries wrapped up first in a cloth and then in the skin of an antelope, is called *futuo*. The *futuo* contains :

1. *Mrammuo*, gold weights (Figs. 114–25).
2. *Nsenia*, scales ; several pairs of various sizes (Fig. 112).
3. *Nsawa*, spoons, for lifting the gold dust and putting it on the scales (Fig. 113).
4. *Famfa*, shovel for scooping up the dust (Fig. 112).
5. *Mmumpuruwa*, boxes for storing the gold dust (Fig. 113).

(1) The *Mrammuo*. An examination of Ashanti weights shows that they fall into three distinct groups :

(*a*) Weights representing the human form, animals, fishes, insects, birds, &c., alone or depicting certain ceremonies and rites, or illustrating some saying or story connected with the object depicted.

(*b*) Weights representing inanimate objects, plants, seeds, fruit, weapons, articles in daily use, &c.

(*c*) Those in which the designs appear geometrical and were perhaps once symbolical.

Groups (*a*) and (*b*) again may be subdivided into such weights as do or do not represent *proverbs*.

Class (*c*) are, in my opinion, the oldest and the most interesting. Their designs seem more or less standardized. I have not yet met a single Ashanti who can give any interpretation or assign any meaning to their symbols. The *swastika* is constantly met alone and in conjunction with other signs. When new weights are made in this class the old designs are copied with more or less accuracy, and no new designs in this category seem now to be made.

Class (*a*) and (*b*). In these classes there is theoretically little if any limit to the number and nature of the possible designs. They seem to be alone limited by the imagination of their designers. The objects portrayed range from a representation of a forest god, a lion, or a human being, to eczema or other skin diseases. On the other hand, a particular design having

once been made, it seems to have been copied on every side, so that the same design is constantly met with.

I have subdivided these two groups into (1) those which may or may not represent the proverbial sayings—in which the Ashanti language is so rich—and (2) those which undoubtedly do represent such proverbs. It is probable, however, that all really fall into the latter class, for where we have a simple as opposed to a composite design, e. g. a lion, an elephant, a tortoise, it is perfectly easy to quote half a dozen sayings in which these animals figure. When we come to the complicated and compound designs there is, however, no possible doubt on this point. I have taken some of these ' proverb ' weights and dealt with them in detail.

A very natural question now arises, i. e. how can these elaborate and intricate designs possibly be cast with sufficient accuracy to give the exact weight required ?

The goldsmith (who casts his weights by the well-known *cire perdu* method of casting, which I will describe presently), having cast a weight in the design he wishes, may find that :

(1) His weight is exactly correct.
(2) It is very much under the required standard.
(3) It is very much over the standard.
(4) Only slightly over the standard.
(5) Only slightly under it.

In the event of (2), he will probably abandon his intention to make the particular weight he had first intended and diminish it to the next nearest lower standard. In case (3), he will make it up to the next weight above, and in cases (4) and (5) make it up or diminish it to the weight he originally intended. In each case the diminishing process is done by filing pieces or cutting pieces off the weight, and the making up, either by adding something, e. g. a little piece of wire, to the design or filling up some cavity, natural or artificial, with lead. (Many weights I have examined show one or other of these methods.)

It is clear, I think, that a certain amount of accuracy in obtaining the required weight is possible of attainment, but it must be clearly understood that the European investigator who expects to find, on testing a number of *mrammuo*, any fine

degree of accuracy in the comparison of weights nominally of the same standard is likely to be disappointed. Human nature rather than the limitations arising from the technique employed is to blame. For the purpose of the present article some sixty weights of various designations and designs have been most carefully weighed in the Assay Office of the Ashanti Goldfields Corporation, to whose acting manager Mr. Mervyn Smith, I am much indebted for this and numerous other courtesies. The results are rather startling, as reference to Appendix A will show.

Allowing for a certain margin of inaccuracy in gauging within reasonable limits the accuracy of an Ashanti weight, I have to explain that the Ashanti goldsmith in the past was possibly not much troubled by an inspector of weights and measures. The stocks of most of these otherwise honourable and clever workers often contain several casts, nominally of the same weight and appearance, but varying somewhat in actual weight. The ethics of this, moreover, do not strike them as at all open to criticism. ' If a man is fool enough not to notice whether the same weight is used for receiving the dust as paying out, surely that is his fault,' is his argument.[1] Moreover, the Ashanti has the highest possible precedent for all this. ' A chief's weights are not the same as a poor man's weights,' runs a well-known proverb. One informant told me that if in the good old days he were ordered to make, say, a *suru* (weight value £1) for the King of Ashanti, he would know how to make it so that the value of the *sika futuru* (gold dust) would be 22*s.* 6*d.* (Hence the suffix *pa* added to the name of a *suru*, which was the standard *suru*.)

When I suggested that a subject might surely protest against what seemed a slight imposition, I was met by the sound logic contained in the proverb :

' A man does not rub bottoms with a porcupine.'

But pure roguery is, as a matter of fact, often far from being at the bottom of all this, and once again, ' to understand all is to forgive all ', for when the student comes to study the régime of an Ashanti court, he will find that the difference in the values

[1] Lawyers will recollect the similar attitude adopted in the case of ' False pretences ' till not so very long ago.

Fig. 111. The shrine of Ta Yao

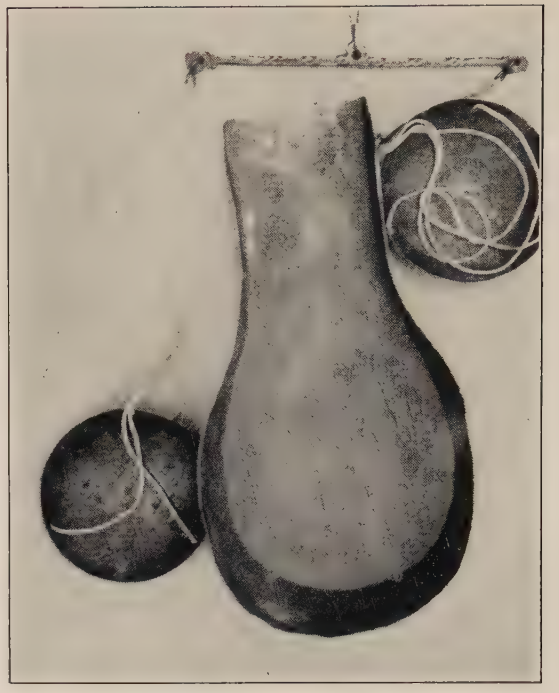


Fig. 112. The scales (*nsenia*) and scoop

Fig. 113. Spoons . . . and boxes . . .

Fig. 114. Ashanti weights

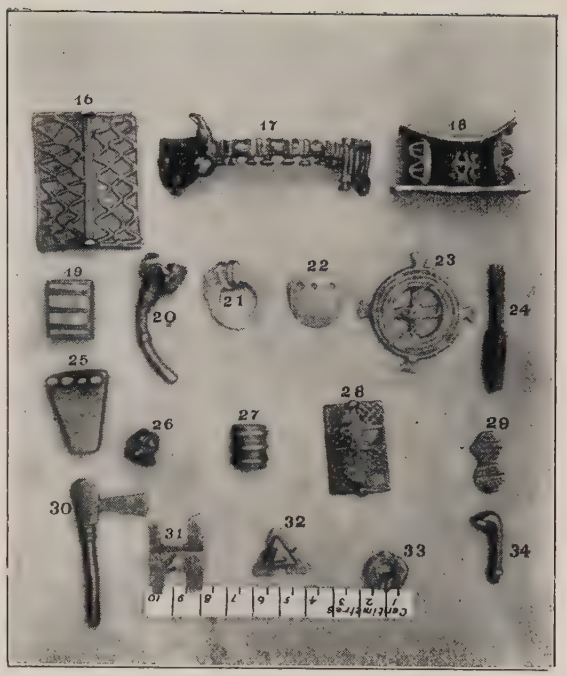


Fig. 115. Ashanti weights

Fig. 116. Ashanti weights

Fig. 117. Ashanti weights

Fig. 118. Ashanti weights

Fig. 119. Ashanti weights

Fig. 120. Ashanti weights

Fig. 121. Ashanti weights

Fig. 122. Ashanti weights

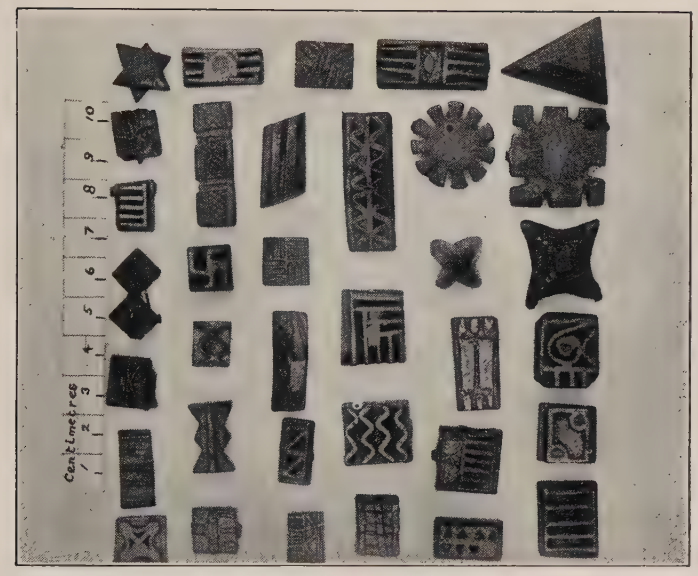


Fig. 123. Ashanti weights

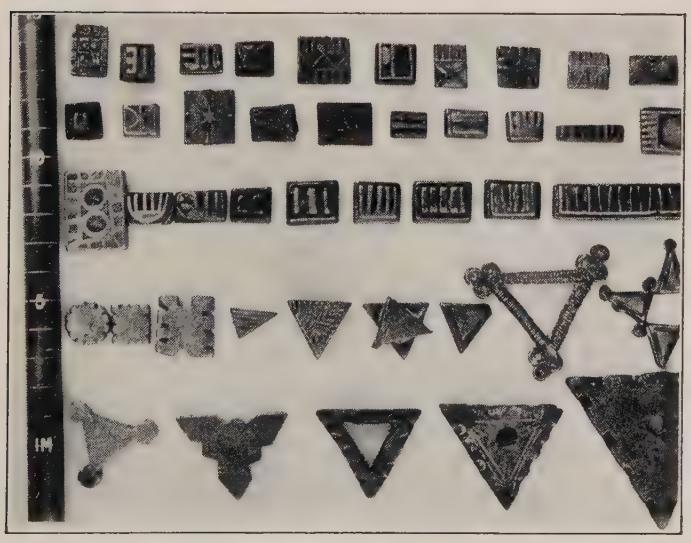


Fig. 124. Ashanti weights

between the 20*s.* and 22*s.* 6*d.* was taken to pay the numerous officials at a court, with whom to settle directly was not considered etiquette. Before coming to a detailed description of the weights themselves and the method of their manufacture, I will briefly describe the other appliances used with them.

The scales (*nsenia*), Fig. 112. Every goldsmith has three or four sets of various sizes. The pair illustrated in the photograph has a delicate design on the trays or cups of a six-petalled flower enclosed in a double concentric circle, and two double concentric circles are also engraved round the edge. This design will be noted on several of the *kuduo*. The beam of the scale also shows a design, which can be seen in the photograph. The scales I have seen used are held between the second finger and the thumb of the left hand, with the free fingers ready to rest on or under the arm to prevent a too sudden drop of one or other tray, which would cause the dust to be spilled.[1] The cords are twisted, three or four ply, as far as the knot, when they branch into three finer strands which pass through the trays on the top surface, and are all joined underneath in one knot. These threads are made of pineapple fibre.

The shovel (*famfa*), Fig. 112, is so exactly the shape and design of that seen in any bank to-day for scooping up coins, that it is difficult not to think the appliance is of European origin. This, however, the Ashanti deny, and insist that they have had it in this form and shape before Oboroni Kwesi, 'the Sunday White man',[2] set foot in West Africa.

The spoons (*nsawa*), Fig. 113, nos. 1, 2, and 3, are of numerous and beautiful designs and reach a high artistic standard. The ordinary word for a spoon for eating with is *ata*, and *sawa* seems only used in this connexion.

The gold-dust boxes (*mmumpuruwa*), Fig. 113. No. 5 is the lid of no. 4, and no. 7 that of no. 6. These boxes are for storing

[1] In W. T. Müller's description of the district of Fetu, he states that the Dutch Commandant in Guinea in the year 1668 issued an order that in the gold trade no pair of scales was to be raised by the hand at all, but that they should be hung on a cross-piece of wood over the counter. 'The Subcommissioner shall lay the weight in one pan and in the other the black trader shall place the gold.'

[2] Europeans, so called from the fact that they observe Sunday.

the gold dust, and sometimes, I believe, are also used themselves as weights.

I have made minute inquiries as to whether the weights representing sayings and proverbs were ever employed as a means of intercommunication. The result of these inquiries has been negative, except, for example, where a man owed another, say, £1, the creditor in such a case might send the weight representing a *suru* (£1) to the debtor as a reminder to pay up.

Yet another interesting point may be noted. Certain fines and fees in native courts are represented by sums which in sterling are not simple fractions of any customary unit but in Ashanti are called by the name of certain standard weights representing a quantity of gold dust of the value stated.[1]

Besides the contents of the *futuo*, every collection contains numerous odds and ends—beads, pieces of the works of old watches, brass buttons, small pieces of metal—the owner knows the exact weights of all of them.

The Making of an Ashanti Weight.

During the past year I made a collection of nearly a thousand weights. Some of these are shown in Figs. 117 to 127. This

A

B

collection, which was seen and admired by many Europeans in Ashanti, started the fashion of collecting these, and the result has actually been to cause a revival in the art of casting them. The new casts, which possibly conform less to any actual weight standard, are of very inferior technique, and can be easily distinguished by the colour of the metal from the old genuine weights. The following is an account of the making of one of the square weights which I witnessed.

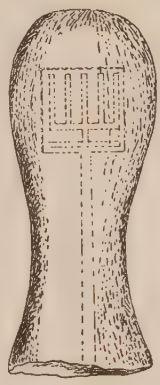
The smith chose from his *futuo* the weight he wished to copy. This was the cast as seen in A.

He next made an exact copy of this in wax, being very careful to make it the same size and thickness, but provided it with

[1] Mr. T. R. O. Mangin, Asst. D.C., suggests that the square or geometrical weights were used in trading, while the 'proverb' weights were used for fines imposed in litigation, when one could be found appropriate to the particular case.

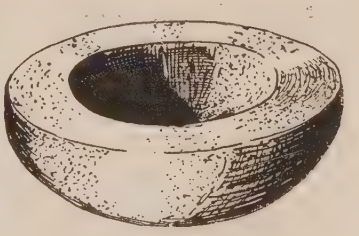
a handle (*gyinae*), also of wax. See B. This handle is what Zeller describes as ' the moulding stick '.

The wax model was next coated with a thin wall or slip of a fine clay[1] which was put on layer by layer till the crevices and wax mould were coated with it. The whole was then covered with much coarser clay mixed with palm-nut fibre[2] and modelled into the shape called *foa dua* shown in C, which shows the wax model lying inside its clay cover in which, in the original, it is of course invisible.



C

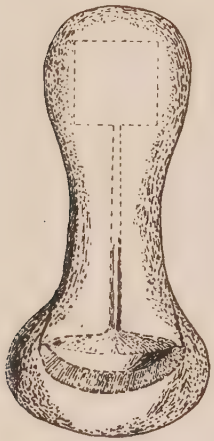
The clay having been allowed to harden, the wax was next melted out by a simple process of heating the clay shape. The wax ran out at *a*. The clay mould now contained an exact impression of the wax model it had formerly contained, and a hollow pipe or duct led to this. The smith now took a small crucible (*semua*), D, into which he put pieces of a brass rod which he had cut into small pieces, and inverted this crucible over the end of the clay mould securing it by luting it with clay, so that the whole now took the shape of E (see p. 308). This was placed in the furnace consisting of a galvanized iron bucket which had been reinforced within with a two-inch layer of cement. In the side of the bucket near the base a hole had been made, and this led through the inside wall of cement. This was for the nozzle of the bellows (see F, p. 308), which, as far as I have observed, are of European pattern. The bucket was filled with burning charcoal, the clay mould placed in it upside down, i. e. the end containing the crucible and the pieces of metal being at the bottom (F). The bellows were worked by a man sitting upon a low stool.


D

I asked the smith how he knew when the metal was melted, and he said he could tell by carefully watching the colour of the flame, which assumed varied hues as soon as the metal in the crucible became liquid.

[1] Powdered charcoal is sometimes mixed with the clay.
[2] Silk cotton is sometimes used instead.

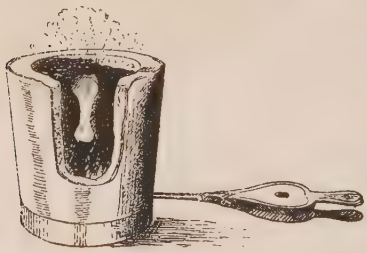
In about fifteen minutes he declared that the metal was melted and removed the *foa dua* with his tongs, quickly inverting it, and allowed it to cool gradually. This done and the outer casing removed, a metal cast of the shape seen in G (see p. 309) was disclosed. The handle was filed off close to the head and the weight cleaned up and polished.



E

This process of manufacture explains why so many Ashanti weights have little protuberances; these are the remains of the *gyinae* or 'moulding stick', which have probably been left purposely and have not been filed completely flush in order to make up a deficiency in the weight.[1]

With regard to the meaning of many of these weights, and considering those with what might be termed geometrical designs, the simple oblongs, squares, &c., I have questioned many Ashanti as to their significance, but I have never met one who could give any explanation of the meaning of their decoration. The *swastika* seen in so many of these weights, either alone or in combination with other decorative effects, they call simply the 'monkey's foot' (see Figs. 122 and 123). One point may perhaps be noted: these designs have not any connexion with a particular weight. It is also rather suggestive that these geometrical designs are not generally found in Ashanti decorative arts where other materials are employed, e.g. on mural decoration or on wood carvings, or in the designs on their *kuduo* which are here briefly noted.



F

When we come, however, to those weights which are cast to represent the human form, animals, plants, fishes, insects, &c., I think it is not an exaggeration to state that each has its own

[1] Fig. 457 in Zeller's monograph shows this clearly, while in Fig. 461 this handle has actually been bent upwards to form part of the design.

particular significance, this again not having any connexion with a stated quantity of metal; for many of the castings of the same design may be widely divergent in weight.

Their ' proverb ' weights, as the Ashanti actually name them, are quite interesting. I have picked out a few ' proverb ' weights from my collection, and have given in each case the proverbial saying which they represent. They are all well known, and about them little difference of opinion exists among the Ashanti themselves. In many cases of course, as already stated, where the design is of a simple nature, e.g. an elephant, a crab, a snake, &c., half a dozen different proverbs may be given by as many people, all of which are equally correct. When the design is more complex, one particular proverb will probably be universally accepted as being the interpretation.

G

It is instructive to see how wide of the mark Zeller is in some of the attempted explanations of these, and it seems a pity that he guessed at what he could not possibly have known, for as he himself says, ' the meaning of many of the representations which we see in the weights can only be properly understood by making inquiries on the spot and of the natives '.

Taking the weights in Fig. 125, no. 1, we have a pair of *ntumpane* drums. There are many proverbs about these, but the one quoted to me in this case was : ' No one takes his talking drums and goes and beats them in the war camp to which he has fled.'

No. 2 represents a model of one of the beautiful old bronze lamps sometimes seen in Ashanti, round the bowl of which sit four doves. There are small rings on each side from which the full-sized lamp is swung. My informant said the doves were sitting round the bowl as if about to drink, and the proverb he quoted was : ' When a man has eaten, he will also drink.'

No. 3 represents an old man carrying an axe and a log of firewood. The proverb about this runs : ' It is a poor man who has to go for firewood.'

No. 4 represents an executioner carrying a head in his left hand and a curious old knife with a double-edged blade, like a spear, called *anofanu*. Note the method of dressing the hair,

called *mpese*, formerly adopted by executioners, now only by the priests. The proverb quoted in this case was: 'Once the executioner has cut off the head he is not afraid of anything again.'

No. 5 represents a man holding his stomach with both hands. This weight is universally known to illustrate the saying that runs: 'The intestines do not help the belly,' i.e. 'Though your stomach may seem filled with them you nevertheless may feel the pangs of hunger.'

No. 6 is a well-known and very usual design, which is everywhere called *nim sa*, lit. 'Had I known that'. The full phrase is, 'Had I known that has passed behind me.' This refers to the animal's backward-sloping horns, i. e. regrets are vain.

No. 7 is a very interesting weight. It appears as Figs. 471 and 472, Table XI, in Zeller's book. Zeller writes: 'We see a bird caught by the foot in a snare and the man is holding a pipe or more probably some kind of fruit. In Fig. 472 the bird has just been taken out of the trap, in Fig. 473 we see that the bag is a splendid cock: in 474 we see the Ashanti with *crossed legs*[1] behind a trap which he has set up.'

No. 7 and all the weights drawn and described as above by Zeller really represent a medicine man sacrificing a fowl to one of the best-known charms in Ashanti, the *nkabere* charm. I once witnessed the making of one of these charms, and the following short account may be of interest. That this charm should have been represented shows how generally the rite is seen.

The object upon the ground, over which the offering is being held (Zeller's trap), is known throughout Ashanti as a charm (*suman*) called *nkabere*, and the ceremony the medicine man is here seen performing is the sacrifice of a fowl preparatory to or after the ceremony known as *Kyekyere nkabere*, lit. to tie or bind the *nkabere*. The *nkabere* consists of three sticks:

(*a*) A stick from the tree called *bonsam dua*, lit. the wizard's tree.

(*b*) A piece of the root of a tree called *akwamea*, taken where it crosses a path.

(*c*) A stick from the tree called *adwin*.

These three sticks are placed upon the ground, or sometimes

[1] The italics are mine.

FIG. 125. Some 'Proverb' weights

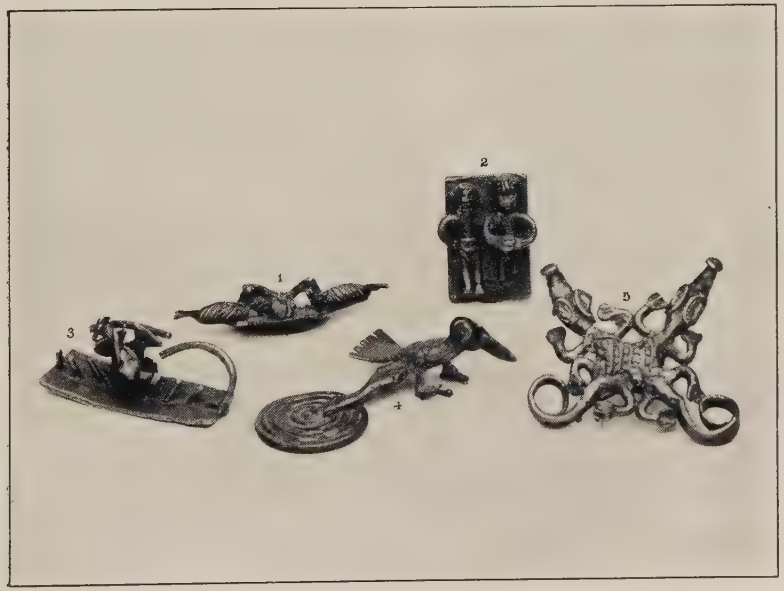


FIG. 126. 'Proverb' weights

FIG. 127. Ashanti weights

FIG. 128. Metal vessels (*kuduo*)

upon an inverted pot, along with some pieces out of a sweeping broom. A piece of string is placed on the top of all.

The medicine man or priest now retires a few paces and then advances towards the charm with his hands behind his back, crossing one leg over the other as he walks. When he reaches the charm he stands with legs crossed, with his hands still behind his back, and stooping down sprays pepper and guinea grain—which he has in his mouth—over the charm, saying: 'My entwining charm *Nkadomako*,[1] who seizes strong men, mosquito that trips up [2] the great silk-cotton tree, shooting stars that live with the Supreme Being, I have to tell you that so-and-so are coming here about some matter.' Here he takes his arms from behind his back and, stooping down, picks up the sticks and twine. Making a little bundle of the sticks he begins to bind them along with the broom sticks, saying as he does so: 'I bind up their mouths. I bind up their souls, and their gods. I begin from Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday.' As he repeats each day he gives a twist of the string round the sticks till he has bound them all together, when he knots the string to keep it from unravelling, ending by saying:

'Whoever comes may this be a match for them.'

From time to time a fowl will be offered to this *suman*. The medicine man or priest will advance upon it with crossed legs and hands held behind the back and perhaps with a whistle in his mouth, to call up the spirits, and will stand over the charm with legs crossed. He then holds the fowl by the neck and blows the whistle. This is what is shown in this weight.

No. 8 shows a medicine man scraping bark from a tree having medicinal properties; his basin to catch the scrapings, is seen on the ground. The following proverb is quoted in connexion with this: 'When you scrape (*were*) the *odom*, the bark falls.' The *odom* is a tree from the bark of which an ordeal poison is made. Zeller suggests that the man may be 'tapping rubber'!

No. 9 depicts a man with a dead monkey slung upon his

[1] A title of Tano. The priest whom I saw performing this rite informed me that he gave his *suman* all these high-sounding titles to please and flatter it, as if it were really a god.

[2] The word used literally signifies 'to trip (in wrestling)'.

back, a gun in his left hand, and standing before a trap in which an antelope has been caught by a noose round the neck. The monkey is suspended from the hunter's neck by its own tail. This represents the well-known saying which runs: 'If some one had not helped me, some one else would have helped me,' meaning that his gun has brought him down a monkey, but had it not, then his trap (dependent on some other influence) would have done so.

No. 10 represents a fowl being offered on the altar to the Sky God, an interesting example of how universal is the cult of this deity; two eggs are represented in the basin on top of the forked pole.

No. 11 represents the meeting of the famous old men known throughout Ashanti as Amoako and Adu, two legendary friends who met again after many years of separation, both having encountered misfortune and become very poor. In many castings one of them is depicted as carrying a bunch of keys, all he has left to show of former wealth.

In Fig. 126, no. 1, is a common design known as 'the beetle has fallen among the fowls'; it represents two birds pecking at a beetle; sometimes a frog is substituted for the beetle.

No. 2 is another well-known and interesting weight (Fig. 475, Table XIX, in Zeller's book is the same). It represents the universally known proverb, 'I who am lying on my back cannot see the Sky God, how do you expect to, who are lying upon your belly?' Here again Zeller's explanation is far from being correct.

No. 3 represents a bird fast in a trap, and the well-known proverb associated with it is, 'The bird caught in the trap is the one to sing sweetly' (to entice you to spare its life).

No. 4 is one of the common designs representing the saying, 'The snake lies upon the ground, but God has given him the hornbill' (that flies in the sky).

No. 5 illustrates another proverb. It represents two crocodiles with two heads and two tails but only one belly between the two. This is the famous *funtum frefu, denkyem frefu* . . . proverb, which runs, 'Bellies mixed up, crocodiles mixed up, we have between us only one belly, but if we get anything to eat

it passes down our respective gullets.' This proverb is often quoted to illustrate any falling away from the due observance of the family system, when one member of it becomes greedy and wishes to seize everything for himself.

In Appendix B to this chapter I give a list of the weights in use as given me by the Ashanti goldsmiths.

Before I close this chapter, I should like to draw attention to another branch of the metal-worker's art as illustrated in the Ashanti *kuduo*. In doing so in this place I wish it to be clearly understood that these bowls or vessels have not any connexion with gold weights, though Zeller, in his monograph, connects the two because of a chance association. He writes, ' these weights (i. e. Ashanti weights) were mostly kept in brass boxes of the same pattern as those used as pomade boxes on the coast. These boxes are prettily engraved and rest on perforated stands ; a candle is often lighted and placed underneath to melt the shea butter in the box to make the pomade carriers use. The system is the same as our modern cooking apparatus for mountain climbers.'

I have shown how wide Zeller is of the mark in his guesses at the significance of some of the weights, and he is equally at sea with regard to his ' grease pots '. I propose here only to give the briefest notice concerning these objects about which I believe nothing is known in Europe, even at museums where specimens of these most interesting vessels are to be found. Their very name has been unknown, and the word *kuduo* does not even appear in Christaller's wonderful *Ashanti Dictionary*.

These *kuduo* or brass vessels have actually no connexion with either Ashanti weights or with the melting of shea butter, though they may now be found used in connexion with both by Africans who have adapted them for this purpose, and have forgotten or perhaps never known the uses for which they were originally employed. Of all specimens of metal-work found in West Africa these *kuduo* are, in my opinion, the most interesting, valuable, and worthy of careful examination. Whether they were originally made in West Africa remains to be proved ; they may just possibly have originated in North Africa or even in Europe and have been carried to West Africa down one of the great

north trade routes, or their technique may have been copied from metal vessels from those regions.[1]

These *kuduo*, photographs of which are reproduced, (Figs. 128–138), were long ago, and among old people still are, used as ceremonial vessels in which to place offerings during the ceremony of 'washing the *ntoro* ' (described in Chap. II), and in other religious rites. But their use did not end here, for when the owner died his *kuduo* was buried with him,[2] gold dust and aggrey beads being placed within it.

During the making of the Coomassie–Ejura road several of these *kuduo* were dug up. I think they are also at times exhumed on purpose to retrieve the valuable contents, perhaps to help to

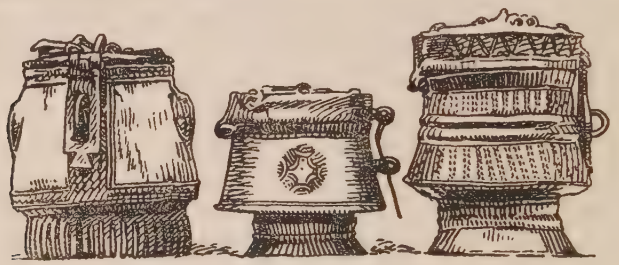


Fig. 139. *Kuduo.*

pay family debts, and thus once again come into circulation. They are extremely valuable and difficult to obtain. A fine collection of *kuduo* is in the possession of Mr. F. W. Leat, who has kindly allowed me to take photographs of them. Several specimens, in my own possession, are also here illustrated. In one or two instances I have found these *kuduo* reverenced as shrines. That in the street at Kokofu, Fig. 136, was said to have belonged to Anotchi, the famous priest who lived in the reign of Osai Tutu. Another interesting specimen, but possibly of a different origin, is to be seen at Nsoko in North Ashanti (see Fig. 137). This bowl or basin is venerated as a god, has its own custodian, and

[1] A drinking cup bearing the Royal arms of Richard Cœur de Lion was found among the possessions of Prempeh and is now in the British Museum. The cover of this vessel is very like the tops of the *kuduo* in Fig. 128 (on left) Fig. 129 (on left), Fig. 130 (centre).

[2] Or sometimes placed on top of the grave. The 'perforated stands' were possibly made to keep the bottom of the vessel from direct contact with the earth.

Fig. 129. Metal vessels (*kuduo*)

Fig. 130. Metal vessels (*kuduo*)

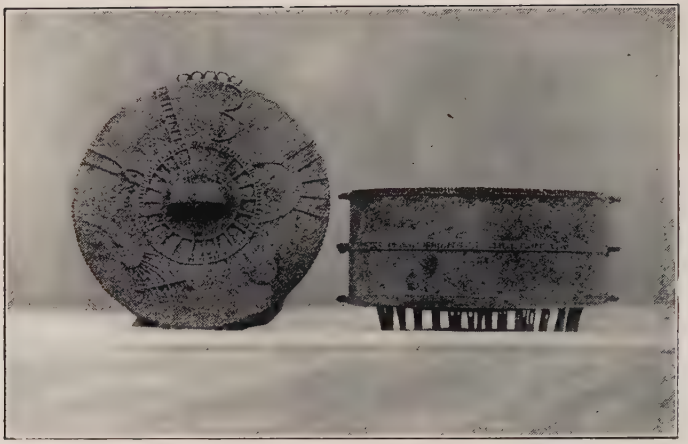


Fig. 131. Metal vessels (*kuduo*)

Fig. 132. Metal vessels (*kuduo*)

Fig. 133. Metal vessels (*kuduo*)

Fig. 134. Metal vessels (*kuduo*)

FIG. 135. Metal vessels (*kuduo*)

FIG. 136. *Kuduo* in street at Kokofu

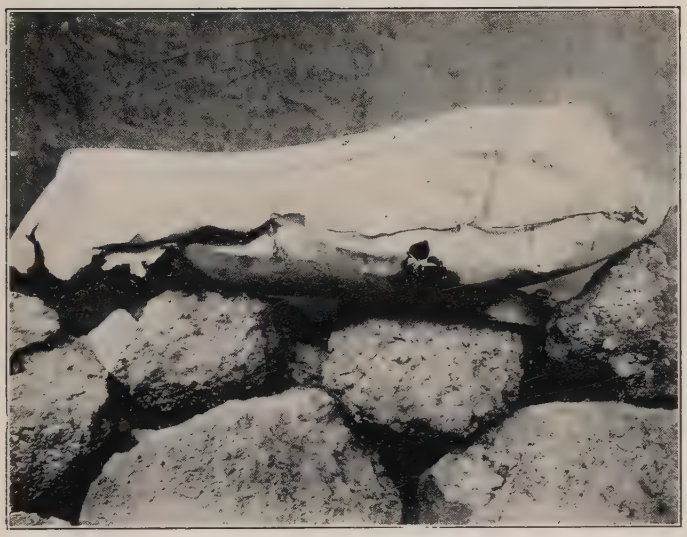


Fig. 137. A metal bowl with inscription in Arabic

Fig. 138. *Kuduo*

has offerings made to it. ' It came from God when the world was first created,' they say. It has ornamental Arabic characters engraved upon it. A basin, which seemed identical, exists at Attabubu, and from a description and rubbing of the characters which I sent home, Professor Margoliouth, of Oxford, stated that it appeared to be thirteenth-century Moorish (from Spain), and that the inscription read, ' Allah the victorious '. This pot or basin is of course much larger than the ordinary *kuduo* and there may not be any connexion between them. The decorations on the Nsoko and Attabubu basins are quite unlike all the rest, and are clearly not West African.

APPENDIX A. ASHANTI GOLD WEIGHTS

Fig. 114 No.	*Ashanti descriptive term.*	*English translation.*	*Ashanti name of weight.*	*English troy.* oz.	dwt.	gr.	*Value approx.*	*Remarks.*
1	Gyata	Lion	*Ntansa*	6	16	21	£24	*Ntansa* = 3 × *nta*. *Nta* = £8, sometimes also *pereguan*.
2	Akyekyeree	Tortoise	*Ntanu-asoanu*	5	13	22	£20	Here the calculation is arrived at by addition = *ntanu* (£16) plus *asoanu* (£4) = £20.
3	Odenkyem	Crocodile	*Ntanu*	4	9	20	£16	
4	Okoto	Crab	*Pereguan-asoanu*	3	8	0	£12	*Pereguan* = £8 plus *asoanu* = £4 = £12 (lit. £2 × 2).
5	Opitiri	Species of fresh water fish	*Pereguan*	2	5	21	£8	The tail of the fish is represented by circles decorated with spirals.
6	Adwetekye[1] Anoma wirenfuo yede apremmo na were no	The wild bird from Adwetekye is guarded with cannons.	*Benna* or *asoasa ne suru*	1	9	21	£7	*Benna* = £7 *asoasa ne suru* £(2 × 3) + 1 = £7. The weight is a bird with two cannon on its back pointing in opposite directions.
7	Anna	Scorpion	*Asoanu*	1	3	7	£4	*Asoanu* = 2 × *osua* = £4.
8	Apese	Hedgehog	*Osoa*	0	12	13	£2	
9	Orosa tiri	Orosa's head; Orosa was the name of an Anwari (*anglice* Aowin) chief who was killed by the Ashanti in the reign of Opoku Ware	*Asoanu*	1	2	21	£4	Note there is a difference of no less than 10 gr. between this and No. 7 though it purports to be the same denomination. This weight was, however, lent by Capt. O. F. Ross, Asst. D.C., as were Nos. 10, 13, and 15; and these were not in actual use.

[1] Adwetekye is the town Aketekyi near Cape coast. The saying refers to the white man's cannons.

10	Aponkyerene	Frog	*Dwoa suru*	0	4	2	15*s.*	Note *suru* is here not the weight of that name, i. e. £2, but is the word *suru*=½, c.f. *twa no suru* (cut it in half). Note the small cavity in the frog's back from which a piece of lead has possibly come out.
11	Sasabonsam	Lit. the *sasa*=spirit of a wizard. A monster of the forest much dreaded	*Asoanu ne dwoa*	1	12	15	£5 10*s.*	Lit. £4 plus £1 10*s.*=£5 10*s.*
12	Anoma no nua ne de wo ne no da dua	The bird's relation is the one he sits with on the tree	*Dwoa*	0	10	13	30*s.*	The design is two birds sitting facing opposite ways on a tree.
13	Afere	Clock bird	*Asia*	0	7	20	26*s.*	Lent by Capt. O. F. Ross.
14	Kawo	Centipede	*Bodomo*	0	3	6	11*s.*	
15	Nim sa ka akyiri	Had I known is now too late (lit. lies back)	*Dwoa*	0	9	11	30*s.*	There is actually 1 dwt. 2 gr. difference between this weight and No. 13, but like No. 13 this weight was not one found in actual use, being lent by Capt. O. F. Ross. The design represents an antelope with an exaggerated backward sweep of the horns. The proverb means 'regrets are vain'.
Fig. 115								
16	Okyem	Shield	*Osoa ne suru*	0	17	12	£3	Shields are no longer either used or to be seen in Ashanti. Their design is, however, preserved to us in these weights. (Lit. *Osua* plus *suru*.)
17	Ntoa	Cartridge-belt	*Osoa ne suru*	0	18	19	£3	Lent by Capt. O. F. Ross. This weight was not actually in use.

Fig. 115 No.	*Ashanti descriptive term.*	*English translation.*	*Ashanti name of weight.*	*English troy.* oz.	dwt.	gr.	*Value approx.*	*Remarks.*
18	Akonnua	Stool	*Asoasa*	1	13	16	£6	
19	Adaka	Box	*Asoanu*	1	2	16	£4	
20	Aben	Horn	*Dwoa*	0	8	19	30*s.*	
21	Eka (?)	Ring	*Nsanu*	0	3	16	13*s.*	
22	Ani mienu nna bon	Two eyes cannot lie in one hole, i. e. two equally powerful men can't live together	*Soafa*	0	0	22	3*s.*	
23	Dua Kantankyinanka	Straggling creepers	*Asia*	0	7	15	26*s.*	The proverb runs: *Dua kantankyinanka wo tumi twa eda wo so; se wo ntumi ntwa a eda wo so* ('The straggling creepers if you do not cut them they entwine you; if you cut them, they entangle you').
24	Mpere	A whip	*Asia*	0	6	16	26*s.*	Made of strips of hide bound together.
25	Efa	Bellows	*Asoanu*	1	2	4	£4	
26	Baba dua aba	Seed of the baba tree	*Nomanu*	0	3	10	12*s.*	
27	Atoduru kwadom	Keg of powder	*Dwoa*	0	8	20	30*s.*	
28	Okyem	Shield	*Asia*	0	7	1	26*s.*	
29	Mprenkesima	Itch (craw craw)	*Borofa*	0	1	4	4*s.*	
30	Akuma	Axe	*Asia*	0	7	13	26*s.*	Lent by Capt. O. F. Ross. Not actually in use.
31	Adada kotodwe	Dwarf's knee	*Nsuansafa*	0	1	11	5*s.*	
32	Sansato	Hawk's bottom	*Nsanu*	0	3	15	13*s.*	There is a saying, *Wo aso sansa 'to* ('You have held a hawk's bottom'), meaning you have got into serious trouble.

33	Eka (?)	Ring		*Soa*	0	1	18	6*s.*	The small piece of wire bound round this and also No. 21 is to make up the weight.
34	Konta	Drum stick		*Nsuansa*	0	2	20	10*s.*	
Fig. 116									
35	Abrammuo	Weight for weighing gold dust		*Pereguan*	2	4	21	£8	
36	,,	,,	,,	*Osoa ne suru*	0	16	17	£3	
37	,,	,,	,,	*Dwoa*	0	8	17	30*s.*	
38	,,	,,	,,	,,		?		30*s.*	
39	,,	,,	,,	,,	0	10	3	30*s.*	Centre is filled in with lead.
40	,,	,,	,,	*Asia*	0	7	8	26*s.*	
41	,,	,,	,,	*Dwoa*	0	9	9	30*s.*	
42	,,	,,	,,	,,	0	8	20	30*s.*	
43	,,	,,	,,	*Osoa*	0	11	2	£2	
44	,,	,,	,,	*Asia*	0	7	11	26*s.*	An elaboration of the *swastika*; the Ashanti call this symbol *'fo'sa*, i.e. 'the hand of the colobus monkey'.
45	,,	,,	,,	,,	0	7	14	26*s.*	
46	,,	,,	,,	*Suru*	0	5	2	£1	Left top corner filed away.
47	,,	,,	,,	*Dwoa*	0	8	16	30*s.*	
48	,,	,,	,,	*Asia*	0	7	14	26*s.*	
49	,,	,,	,,	*Nomanu*	0	3	7	12*s.*	
50	,,	,,	,,	,,	0	4	7	12*s.*	
51	,,	,,	,,	*Suru*	0	5	15	£1	
52	,,	,,	,,	*Nomanu*	0	2	6	12*s.*	
53	,,	,,	,,	*Nsanu*	0	3	20	13*s.*	
54	,,	,,	,,	*Domma*	0	2	2	7*s.*	
55	,,	,,	,,	*Borofa*		?		4*s.*	
56	,,	,,	,,	*Agyiratwe*	0	2	13	9*s.*	
57	,,	,,	,,	*Nsuansa*	0	2	19	10*s.*	
58	,,	,,	,,	*Bodomo*	0	3	18	11*s.*	
59	,,	,,	,,	*Soa*	0	1	23	6*s.*	
60	,,	,,	,,	*Agyiratwe*	0	2	8	9*s.*	
61	,,	,,	,,	*Soa*	0	1	22	6*s.*	
62	,,	,,	,,	*Domma*	0	2	1	7*s.*	
63	,,	,,	,,	*Ntakuanum*	0	0	18	2*s.* 6*d.*	Five *ntaku*.

APPENDIX B

The following is a list of standards in use, each one of which has its own separate weight. The value (approximately) that is given is in English currency.

Ashanti name of weight.	*Approximate value of gold dust in English currency.*
Powa hu[1]	½ of 1*d.*
Pesa or *Pesewa*	1*d.*
Damma	1*d.*
Takufa	3*d.*
Kokwa (*kokoa*)	4*d.*
Taku	6*d.*
Nkowa mienu[1]	9*d.* (not 8*d.*
Ntaku mienu	1*s.*
,, *miensa*	1*s.* 6*d.*
,, *anan*	2*s.*
,, *anum*	2*s.* 6*d.*
Soafa	3*s.*
Fiasofa	3*s.* 2*d.*
Dommafa	3*s.* 6*d.*
Borofa	4*s.*
Gyiratwefa[2]	4*s.* 6*d.*
Nsoansafa	5*s.*
Bodomfa	5*s.* 6*d.*
Soa	6*s.*
Fiaso	6*s.* 6*d.*
Domma	7*s.*
Brofo	8*s.*
Agyiratwe	9*s.*
Nsuansa	10*s.*
Bodomo.	11*s.*
Nomanu	12*s.*
Nsanu	13*s.*
Dwoasuru	15*s.*
Nanfisuru	17*s.* 6*d.*
Bremanansuru	18*s.* 6*d.*
Surupa[3]	20*s.*
Piresuru[4]	22*s.* 6*d.*
Tekiman soa	25*s.*
Asia	26*s.*
Dwoa	30*s.*
Onamfi	33*s.* 6*d.*
Onansoa	37*s.*
Osoa (*pa*)	40*s.*
Osoa ne nsuansa	50*s.*

[1] From *Powa hu* to *nkowa mienu*, all these weights are seeds.
[2] Fanti Dadako.
[3] Lit. a 'true' or good *suru*.
[4] In Ashanti 22*s.* 6*d.*, on the coast 22*s.*; this weight is used to cheat the unwary.

Ashanti name of Weight.	*Approximate value of gold dust in English currency.*
Osoa ne suru	60*s.*
Asoanu	80*s.*
Asoanu ne suru	100*s.*
Asoanu ne dwoa	110*s.*
Asoasa	120*s.*
Benna	140*s.*
Pereguan	160*s.*
Pereguan asia	186*s.*
Pereguan soa [1]	£10
Tasuanu [2]	£12
Ntanu	£16
Ntanu Asoanu	£20
Ntansa	£24
Pereguan anan	£32
,, *num*	£40
,, *nsia*	£48
,, *nson*	£56
,, *nwotwe*	£64
,, *nkron*	£72
,, *du*	£80

[1] This weight is possessed by chiefs only. In case of a death sentence commuted for a fine, this is the amount that had to be paid.

[2] From £12 upwards only in the possession of chiefs, and so up to 100 *pereguan*=£800. This weight was sent to Adinkira, the Gyaman King, to demand its weight in gold dust. There are special scales called *Akontuma* to weigh these heavier amounts. The smaller scales are known as *mframa nsenia*, lit. wind scales, i. e. scales which a breath of wind will cause to fluctuate.

XXVI

NEOLITHIC IMPLEMENTS IN ASHANTI

I HAVE had occasion several times in the preceding chapters to mention neoliths, which in Ashanti are known as God's axes or God's hoes, and the following fuller notes upon them may be of interest. In the year 1911 it was my good fortune to be in Ashanti during the latter part of the construction of the Coomassie–Ejura main trunk road, and to have obtained a collection of celts which were then unearthed. These formed the subject of a most interesting paper by Mr. Henry Balfour (of the Pitt-Rivers Museum, Oxford) in the *Journal* of the African Society,[1] and I advise all who are interested to consult that article. In 1921 I found myself again in Ashanti as Government Anthropologist. In the short time that has elapsed since taking up my new work some hundred more specimens of celts have been obtained, a few being found by me *in situ*, and many were dug up by the Ashanti farmers, and one, the largest, was lately dredged up from the bottom of the Offin River. Some were associated with the cult of the *abosom*, the *suman*, or of *'Nyame*.

While it is correct to state that probably ninety-nine out of a hundred Ashanti declare and actually believe that the stone celts found by them emanate from the sky, and are in consequence endowed with some of the power of the Sky God, *'Nyame*, sufficient evidence is available to prove beyond a doubt that there are still alive in Ashanti to-day persons who know that these stones are artifacts, and that they were used by their ancestors at a period that was relatively recent. The Ashanti generally call them *'Nyame akuma* or *'Nyame asoso*, i. e. the Sky-God's axes or hoes. They believe that they fall from the sky during thunderstorms and bury themselves in the earth. They think that, as they come from *'Nyame*, they are endowed with some of the power of that great spirit, and this is the explanation of their use in connexion with *abosom* and of their

[1] No. XLV, Vol. XII, October 1912.

supposed potency as medicine. As a consequence of this belief they are constantly to be found as appurtenances to *abosom* (the gods), *suman* (charms), '*Nyame dua* (altar to the Sky God), or placed in a pot where the drinking water is kept, 'to cool the heart'. They are also sometimes fastened against the body to cure diseases, or are ground down and the powder drunk.

I am inclined to believe it is thought heterodox to say anything contrary to the above, because these, being the popular beliefs, are encouraged by the *akomfo* (priests), and that some of the old people who really know better say nothing, confess ignorance, or acquiesce in the generally accepted opinion.

Nevertheless, I have been informed by several old men that, according to traditions handed down to them, the so-called 'God's axes' were really tools used by their ancestors in the past, not only previously to but contemporaneously with, a period when the smelting of iron was practised.

Kakari, an exceptionally intelligent Ashanti, gave me the following statement, before I was aware of the existence of the very long celts here illustrated:

'My grandfather, Kakari Panyin, once told me that he had been told by his grandfather, who himself had heard of, but had not seen them in use, that very very long ago the Ashanti used the stone hoes which are now called '*Nyame akuma*. My grandfather also told me our ancestors formerly wore a girdle with leaves before and behind. He said these axes were not originally the short things now found but were very long, and that they used them for hoeing, holding them in both their hands and digging between their open legs' (translation from the vernacular). Kakari could not say clearly whether they were hafted or not. He picked up a stick lying against the verandah, to show the length, and held it about 1½ to 2 feet up the shaft.[1] Later, and after I had seen the long celts (Figs. 141 and 142), another old man, Kobina Wusu,[2] between seventy and eighty years of age, told me that his grandfather once told him that very long ago the Ashanti used hoes made of stone a cubit long, demonstrating this by holding out the right arm, fingers pointing, and touching the elbow-joint with the left hand. When asked

[1] A celt of this length, from the Gold Coast, is now in the British Museum.
[2] His photograph may be seen in Fig. No. 41.

why they did not use iron, he replied that they also used it but that it was scarcer and more difficult to work than stone, and was only used for making *nabuo* (iron money). These statements were made independently, and neither informer had ever had any intercourse with Europeans, and neither had been told by me the real origin of these celts. The points of interest in these statements are :

I. The fact that a definite tradition still survives of a stone age.

II. The statement in each case that the celts were long (a foot or more).

III. The fact that in one case iron-working was stated to have been practised contemporaneously with the use of stone.

It may be here noted that the late Major Tremeane, in Nigeria, also once met an old native who knew the true origin of these celts. I shall have more to say later as to the length of the celts. It may be stated, however, that long celts have been discovered ; for example, one numbered 1 in Fig. 141 measures 24 centimetres. Long celts were apparently already known ; Mr. Balfour, in the article alluded to, speaks of ' two long slender celts from the Offin River ', but does not give their dimensions.

With regard to iron currency, I had not before heard of *nabuo* or of an iron currency in Ashanti. Moreover, the Ashanti do not now work iron ore, nor are there any obvious traces of their ever having done so.

In Chapter IV, p. 47, of a rather rare old book entitled *History of the Gold Coast and Ashanti*,[1] by a native pastor, the Rev. C. C. Reindorf, in referring to Kwabia Amanfi, one of the earliest Kings of Ashanti of whom tradition has any record, writes : ' All we know of him is that in his days gold was not known, the currency was pieces of iron.'

The word *nabuo*, used by the old Ashanti, is without doubt derived from two words, *dade*, with a plural *nnade*, iron ore, and *buo*, to pound or break up, and it describes the process by which the laterite found in Ashanti was prepared for smelting.

Ashanti traditional lore seems to go back to this first King Kwabia Amanfi. Reindorf gives his date very roughly as 1600,

[1] Printed at Basle.

Fig. 140. Showing some fragments of *nsemua* (tuyers) and celts

Fig. 141. Showing several long celts

and fifteen Ashanti kings are recorded since then, ending with Prempeh, who was exiled in 1896.

We thus have some approximate data which would appear to point to the fact that four hundred to five hundred years ago iron was so little worked—I do not say known—that it was used as currency in Ashanti. If this be so, then we should expect an overlapping of the Stone Age with the Iron Age until European iron was imported, and further interesting evidence seems to confirm this supposition.

Before passing on to this I may state that in Reindorf's *History*, he also constantly alludes to the lost art of iron-smelting in Ashanti, which, according to him, vanished when iron rods began to be imported from Europe. These rods were apparently at first used as currency, for he talks of 'the piece of an iron bar which was the ordinary pay of a soldier'. I have never seen any of this *nabuo* or iron currency, and there are not any visible traces in Ashanti of iron furnaces, such as may be seen in Togoland.[1] There is, however, evidence that iron was once worked.[2]

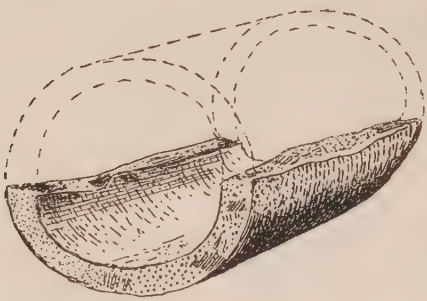
The town of Obuasi in Ashanti is the centre of a large gold-mining industry; it lies in a valley surrounded by isolated hills which rise to a height of 500–600 feet from the plain below. Many of these hills have been cleared of the dense forest which formerly grew upon them, and are now occupied by Government bungalows. There is neither outward sign nor tradition of these having been the settlements of the Ashanti in the past, but to judge by the remains under the soil, they must have been the former sites of large communities.

It is no exaggeration to state that there is hardly a square foot of ground on the tops of some of these hills which does not contain fragments of pottery; and I was informed many celts had also been found there. The pottery bears an endless variety of designs, herring bone, bands, elliptical punch-marks, contiguous and detached circles, &c. A celt was also found by me about 6 inches below the surface (Fig. 140, no. 3). A few yards from it and in the same strata were unearthed two curious objects of clay, one apparently unbaked, the other having been

[1] See 'The Iron Workers of Akpafu', *J. R. A. I.*, Vol. XLVI, 1916, by R. S. Rattray.

[2] Since my return to Africa two manilla were brought to me, they had been dug up near Lake Bosomtwe.

subjected to intense heat (Fig. 140, nos. 1, 2, and 4). These seemed to be fragments of a pipe, and reconstructed would have this appearance:



For some time I could not obtain any explanation of these objects; later, however, on my showing the collection of pottery to an old Ashanti, he singled out these fragments at once and said they were *nsemua* (sing. *semua*). He stated he recognized them as similar to one he had at home which had been handed down by his ancestors. The *semua*, so he had been told, was used for smelting gold. The one in his possession was sent for and later presented to me. It was completely glazed and encrusted with a dark brown substance (Fig. 140, no. 4). The *nsemua* found by me, the pottery and a celt, were all discovered on the east side of the hill known as D. C.'s hill, and about ten yards from the flat top upon which the bungalow I was then living in was built. An examination of these *nsemua*, (two found by me and one given to me) made in the Assay Office of the Ashanti Gold-fields Corporation, gave the following result:

'*Semua.* Both samples which have been used show only a trace of gold.'

'One end of the unbroken *semua* is encrusted with a dark brown substance which corresponds to Ferrous Silicate.'

'This material is only present at one end, the other end being quite free.'

'An unused *semua* shows on grinding that it is composed of unburnt clay and sand intimately mixed.'

'There is no room for doubt that the *semua* were tuyers used in a native blast furnace and that one specimen was that end which came in contact with the molten slag.'

Mr. Mervyn-Smith, the Acting Manager of the Ashanti Gold-fields Corporation to whose courtesy and interest I am indebted for the assay of these specimens, also sent me a paper by J. Morrow Campbell—read before a meeting of the Institute

of Mining and Metallurgy [1]—from which the following is an extract :

' In various parts of the Gold Coast from the shores of the Nani lagoon to Ashanti are to be seen heaps of slag. No remains of furnaces are to be found. . . .

' They are generally attributed to the Portuguese, but this is not credible.'

Mr. Campbell then proceeds to describe native blast furnaces in Haute Guinée ; he writes :

' . . . when the walls have reached a height of 18 in., about a dozen irregular elliptical holes about 1 ft. long by over 6 in. high are left at equal intervals. A large number of open pipes or " Tuyers ", tapering from about 2 in. at one end to over 1 in. at the other and over ½ in. in thickness, composed of a mixture of clay and sand, are made and thoroughly dried in the sun. They are inserted small end downwards,' &c.

I think enough has been said to indicate that those *nsemua* found associated with a celt, are relics of an iron-smelting age in Ashanti, and would seem to show that the Stone Age in Ashanti survived into comparatively recent times and overlapped the Iron Age.

With reference to the statements of those Ashanti, who say that the stone hoes or axes were originally longer than those now commonly known, I propose to consider some specimens I have at present available, with a view to seeing if this is a reasonable supposition. An examination of any collection of West African celts—I have about a hundred before me as I write, not including the photographs of forty-one more in the article by Mr. Balfour, to which reference has been made—will show that they fall into one or other of the following groups (see p. 328).

1. Short celts with ground edges and tapering butt (A).
2. Short celts with ground edges, the butt as wide, or nearly so, as the cutting edge (B).
3. Short celts in all stages intermediate between these two.
4. Cylindrical stones with both ends blunt (no cutting-edge) (C).
5. Cones (D).
6. Very long celts tapering towards the butt (rare) (E) (see p. 329).

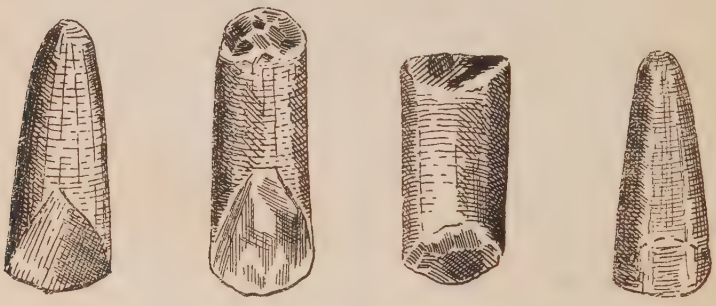
Let us now take any of the longer celts shown in Fig. 141,

[1] No. 67, 14th April 1910.

nos. 1–5, say no. 1. This is the longest celt in the group, but even it appears to have lost perhaps 2 cm. at the tapering end. (The celt in Fig. 141, no. 2, certainly has; nos. 3 and 5 in the same Figure are probably unbroken.)

Let us now suppose such a celt to be actually in use as in the drawing F (see p. 329), the cutting-edge *A*, 1, will gradually wear away or possibly chip off, and will have to be re-ground, when 2 will become the edge, then 3, and so on.

Should such a celt be used for a long period it will in time, by a process of re-grinding, pass through all the stages represented by the curved dotted lines till it reaches no. 7 or even 8,



A B C D

the short celt with tapering butt so commonly seen. After this, once the point is gone it would become useless except perhaps for rubbing skins or smoothing pots; in any case it will not permit of further grinding. This gives the celt in class 1, Fig. A. Should, however, as seems very possible, the celt sometimes snap off before it has been often re-ground, say, e.g. down the dotted line *a* or *b*, we should then have a tool the other extremity of which would no longer be pointed but giving us celts (longer or shorter according to the breaking-point) that fall under class 2 (Fig. B). Fractures at any of the intermediate places up to about 8 would give us class 3. Supposing now edge 2 to have been reached and a break occurring near the dotted straight line *b*, if edge 2 in turn later broke off, say near *a*, it would leave a short, stumpy cylinder with two blunt ends which is too short to re-sharpen. Type 4 (Fig. C) would result. A fracture when the sixth or seventh cutting-edge was in use would leave cone-shaped stumps, and give class 5 (see Fig. D).

Fig. 142. Showing three long celts

Fig. 143. Showing one long celt

It is obvious how much time and trouble would be saved by manufacturing one long celt rather than a number of short implements. The workman carries in one tool twenty spares or more, for, except in case of accident, the wearing-down process would be a more gradual one than that suggested. Instead of many weeks, if not months, of labour involved in shaping from the rough, innumerable short celts, whose life must have been very short, the one rough shaping would give the basis of a tool which was for all practical purposes as good as, or better—for it had weight behind it—than twenty smaller ones.

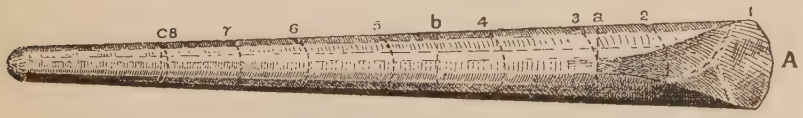
E

Fig. 141 shows five long celts (nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5), and an attempted arrangement of the ordinary celt so commonly found, giving an imaginary reconstruction of a long celt.

Fig. 142 shows three long celts with a group of the ordinary type which would fall under my classes 2 and 3 (see. p. 327).

Fig. 143 shows again the long celt with celts falling into class 1 (see p. 327).

In Fig. 140[1] I have included two celts (nos. 5 and 6) which fall, I think, into a different class altogether. They are very similar to, but larger than, no. 25 in the Ejura collection in Mr. Balfour's article; no. 5 has clearly had its tapering end fractured.



A

F

An analysis of the composition, together with a note of the hardness, specific gravity, &c., of several of the celts illustrated, may be of interest.[2]

[1] The rod showing the centimetre scale is part of the excellent height standard supplied by the R.A.I., the grooves and figures on which are rubbed over with white chalk to make them distinct in the photograph.

[2] For this report I am again indebted to the Manager of the Ashanti Gold-fields Corporation, as also to Mr. Drew the assayer.

'The small celt found associated with *nsemua* at Obuasi is composed of Epidiorite. The hardness is 7 on Moh's scale. The specific gravity is 3·00.' (See Fig. 140, no. 3).

'Other celts found in the vicinity of Obuasi are hewn from a greenish-coloured rock of local origin. The hardness is 7, the specific gravity ranges from 3·00 to 3·10. Under the microscope a thin section of this rock shows a decomposed Plagioclase felspar and green laminae of Actinolitic Hornblend.'

'A section of a celt shews a more compact variety of the same species which is an Epidiorite.'

'The celts withstand weathering; in the majority of cases a thin layer of $\frac{1}{16}$ in. to $\frac{1}{8}$ in. has been decomposed.'

Celt no. 2, Fig. 141, 21 cm. in length. This celt was given me at Bekwai some miles north of Obuasi; it was stated to have been used in connexion with the cult of *'Nyame*. 'The specific gravity is 3·04. Hardness is 7. It is similar to those found at Obuasi.'

Celt no. 1, Figs. 141–3. This celt was dredged up in the Offin River and was sent me by the courtesy of Mr. Green of Coomassie. It is 24 cm. long. Mr. Drew, the assayer, writes:

'The specific gravity is 3·04. Hardness 7. Similar to those found at Obuasi. This celt and the one used on the *Onyame dua* are very little weathered on the surface.'

Celt no. 7, Fig. 140, no. 2, Fig. 142, and no. 3, Fig. 141, 21·15 cm. This celt was given to me at Asubengya, a village north of Bekwai. The native stated he found it in his farm while digging, about 1 foot below the surface. Mr. Drew's report upon it is as follows:

'Specific gravity 2·58. Hardness 2. This celt is hewn from Phyllite (which represents a type of rocks intermediate between Mica schists and Slates).'

'It is far softer than those previously mentioned, being similar in this respect to Gypsum.'

'Phyllites are of common occurrence in this district [Bekwai].'

Celt no. 4, Fig. 141, 18·3 cm., was purchased by me in Mampon, Ashanti, but the vendor stated he had brought it from Accra.

Celt no. 5, Fig. 141, and no. 3, Fig. 142, 15 cm., was purchased at Bekwai. It, like several other celts in my possession, is fluted, a cross-section showing fourteen facets.

The long celt from the Offin River also shows on one side

distinct signs of a similar process, the opposite side is smooth; possibly it lay half-buried and the upper surface was smoothed away by friction of water or sand. This fluting would serve to prevent a celt slipping either in the hand or in a socket. Finally, as a possible explanation as to why celts such as that found in the Offin are so rarely seen, and to account for the predominance of the well-known short and stumpy type, I suggest that the transition from the Neolithic to the Iron Age was not sudden. The stone implement and the iron one that was eventually to oust it must have been for a time used side by side in the forest and in the field. A good stone hoe such as the Offin River specimen, would, it is more than probable, have been used as long as it was serviceable, and serviceable it must have been with a hardness equal to that of quartz. But once it had had its day, and bit by bit its cutting-edge neared the end, its owner would not, as in olden times, sit down for months to fashion another weapon of like nature; he would purchase, or make, or have made, one of the new superior 'stone', i. e. iron.

Hence it would be that no 'God's axes', in the form in which they left the craftsman's hands, would come down to us, save only those few which accident or mischance had caused to be lost in the forest, the field, or the river, before use had reduced these beautiful implements to the short, stubby, stumpy things we now see and, perhaps wrongly, think them always to have been.

APPENDIX

NOTE ON THE MEASUREMENTS OF THE ASHANTI MADE BY CAPT. RATTRAY

By L. H. Dudley Buxton, M.A., Lecturer in Physical Anthropology, University of Oxford.

The series of measurements under review comprises those of forty-eight men and twenty-seven women. A few additional men and one other woman were also measured, but they were rejected in the final count either because of their parentage or because they belonged to other tribes; the woman was not included for reasons which will be discussed later.

All the people included in the final count came from within fifty miles of one another, mostly from either Bekwai or Obuasi. In spite of the small numbers it has seemed worth while to work out the constants, for, although no definite conclusion can be arrived at from so small a series, the constants may be of value for comparative purposes. (See Tables 1 and 2.) No crania were available for examination.

The measurements differ in certain particulars from those previously obtained. Sergi,[1] unfortunately without quoting his authority, gives the Ashanti stature as 1693 mm. for males and 1554 mm. for females. It is of interest to note that the stature of Nigerian natives measured by Mr. Talbot and published by Sir Arthur Keith [2] agrees closely with Sergi's figure.

Sergi's figure for the cephalic index (77·3 ♂, 76·5 ♀) does not differ from Rattray's; the Nigerian crania have a similar value to Rattray's Ashanti, if we allow a difference of 2 or rather more units between the living and the dead. The figures for the living Nigerians tend, however, to a slightly greater dolichocephaly, emphasizing the difficulty at arriving at a satisfactory figure from small numbers of observations. Shrubsall [3] on a series of

[1] *L'Uomo*, p. 188.

[2] Keith, *Journ. Roy. Anthrop. Inst.*, 1911.

[3] Shrubsall, *J.R.A.I.*, 1898.

fifty-eight which included both males and females found a cephalic index of 72·7, a far greater degree of dolichocephaly even after we made allowance for the difference between the living and the dead. These various differences seem to be greater than can be accounted for by random sampling. Rattray's value for the nasal index is similar but slightly lower than that of the Nigerians in Keith's series and very much smaller than Sergi's, the latter's figures being 114·3 ♂ and 102 ♀. The bizygomatic width and the upper facial index indicate a similarity with Keith's types from Nigeria.

It is clear then that we have certain points of great resemblance to Keith's Nigerian types and certain interesting divergencies. The difference in stature is perhaps the most remarkable. It might be suggested that this difference is due to an admixture between a short, possibly a pygmy type, with a tall negro. The extremely small stature of one female, only 1213 mm. would lend colour to that supposition. This little woman is, however, an isolated case and it has been deemed advisable to exclude her from the constants on the ground that she differed so much from the rest that to include her would make a very appreciable difference to the constants, and I have taken it as an axiom that where a series is significantly affected by the inclusion or exclusion of a single individual, that individual should not be included. Apart from this one individual then, the series shows a small standard deviation. The numbers are admittedly small, but so small a standard deviation suggests that we have not a mixture of tall and short—I am referring to their present validity not to their origin—but a comparatively homogeneous people of medium or sub-medium stature. The small variation in the cephalic index also suggests that we have, not a mixture of races, but a single more or less homogeneous type.

The nasal index is, as usual, variable but rather less variable than we find in those peoples where a mixture of races is taking place. Professor Arthur Thomson[1] has shown that there is a close correlation between the nasal index and the conditions of temperature and the moisture of the air to which peoples have been subjected. It yet remains to be shown how long is required for altered conditions, due either to the migration of a people or

[1] Thomson and Buxton, *J.R.A.I.*, 1923.

to a change of climate to produce a reaction which can be observed in changed anatomical features.

A point of considerable interest, and one that deserves consideration when we have more data, is that the females, especially when the measurements are taken on the living, are apt to be more leptorrhine than the males. In this series the difference is 5 per cent. Possibly this is due to the greater thickness of the soft structures which form the alae of the nostrils among the males. The greater development of the masticatory apparatus in the male may also be not without influence on the form of nose.

Such conclusions as we may make at present can only be provisional, but they may form a starting-point for further investigations. The small variation of the people deserves testing on a long series, if possible several series from different parts of Ashanti. Our present evidence suggests that we are dealing with a people who, whatever their origin may have been, have at present developed into a strictly homogeneous race, possibly owing to the destruction of abnormal types by environmental influence. Shrubsall has pointed out that the Ashanti are geographically secluded both from the Europeans on the coast and also from the Hamitic Negro tribes pressing across the Niger plains. Our present evidence would certainly support the theory of a secluded people, but until we have further measurements from different parts of Ashanti, we cannot decide whether the differences of measurements recorded by different observers are due to the small number of persons measured, or to local variations due to environment or other causes of which we are at present ignorant. For the same reasons it is hardly possible to speculate with any degree of likelihood on the exact racial affinities of these interesting peoples, on the slender evidence of the series of measurements now before us.

TABLE I. MALES

Measurement	*Mean.*	σ.	*V.*
Stature	164·21±·54	5·53±·38	3·37±·23
Glabello-occipital length	187·33±·45	4·66±·32	2·49±·17
Greatest breadth	145·02±·43	4·41±·30	3·04±·21
Minimum frontal diameter	107·60±·40	4·07±·28	3·78±·26
Bizygomatic breadth	134·67±·42	4·28±·29	3·18±·22
Bigonial breadth	101·73±·51	5·25±·36	5·16±·36
Nasal height	45·17±·24	2·48±·17	5·49±·38
Nasal breadth	42·48±·31	3·20±·22	7·54±·52
Upper facial height	59·89±·44	4·48±·31	7·47±·52
Total facial height	108·29±·57	5·87±·40	5·42±·41
Cephalic index	77·52±·24	2·47±·17	3·18±·22
Nasal index	95·17±·91	9·39±·65	9·87±·69
Upper facial index	44·17±·91	3·10±·21	7·03±·49
Total facial index	80·29±·40	4·07±·28	5·07±·35

The stature is given in centimetres, all the other measurements are in millimetres. 48 measurements were made in every case except stature where only 47 were made. σ = standard deviation, V = coefficient of variation.

TABLE II. FEMALES.

Measurement.	*Mean.*	σ.	*V.*
Stature	154·74±·65	5·04±·46	3·26±·30
Glabello-occipital length	176·70±·67	5·06±·46	2·86±·26
Greatest breadth	136·85±·51	3·90±·36	2·85±·26
Minimum frontal diameter	104·15±·34	2·63±·24	2·53±·23
Bizygomatic breadth	126·33±·45	3·50±·32	2·77±·25
Bigonial breadth	96·19±·47	3·62±·33	3·76±·35
Nasal height	40·81±·43	3·33±·31	8·17±·75
Nasal breadth	36·78±·23	1·76±·16	4·79±·44
Upper facial height	53·85±·70	5·43±·50	10·09±·94
Total facial height	98·54±·78	6·04±·55	6·13±·57
Cephalic index	77·78±·35	2·73±·25	3·50±·32
Nasal index	90·39±·73	5·65±·52	6·25±·58
Upper facial index	42·56±·57	4·39±·40	10·31±·96
Total facial index	78·13±·73	5·62±·52	7·19±·66

The stature is given in centimetres, all the other measurements are given in millimetres. 27 measurements were made in every case. σ = standard deviation. V = coefficient of variation.

INDEX

Aban, 119, 201
Abankwadie *ntoro* exogamous division, 47
Abanso village, 58
Abayifo : *see* Witches.
Abebrese, 290
Abena Firi, Queen Mother, 122 ; her story of the sacred grove at Santemanso, 123–4
Aberewa (Old Mother Earth), 215
Aberewa (' the old woman '), 56
Aberewa river, 61
Aboabogya, 9
Aboka, 47
Abono, villages named, 69, 70, 72, 73
Abontuo, 66
Abora, 136
Abosom : *see* Gods ; *abosom nom*, 109–10 ; *abosom toa*, 110
Abrade sub-clan, 124
Abrafo : *see* Executioners.
Abrodwum'bo, 58, 59
Abrodwum village, 57, 58, 59
Abusua (clan or blood), 23, 34, 35, 37–9, 41–4, 45, 46, 52, 77, 78, 80
Accra, 294
Ada sub-clan, 124
Adaduanan, 93, 114
Adae, the word, 83, 92
Adae ceremonies, 159, 167, 216–19, 290 *n.* ; pieces drummed at the festivals, 258. Brong *Adae* (*Muruwukuo*), 92, 114–20. Queen Mother's *Adae* ceremony, 105–6. Sunday *Adae* (*Adae kese* or *Kwesidae*), 83, 92, 93, 107–8. Wednesday *Adae* (*Wukudae* or *Kupadakuo*), 92–104, 109–12, 114, 207
Adae kese ceremony : see *Adae* ceremonies.
Adanse, 266, 280 *n.*
Adapa, 93, 94, 107, 114
Adare, 71
Adawuru ; *see* Gongs.
Adinkira, king of Gyaman, 178, 179 *n.*, 180, 189, 190 ; his imitation of the ' Golden Stool ' and its consequences, 291
Adu, 282 ; legend of, 312
Adu Ogyinae, 124
Aduampafrantwi, 283
Aduana clan, 124, 125, 215
Aduanwoma, 285
Adufodie : *see* Bosommuru.
Adultery, 131, 154 ; redress for, 154 ; varying degrees of, 50 ; with goldsmith's wife, special fine for, 301 ; with the king's wives, punished with forfeiture, 227
Adum, 156
Adwetekye : *see* Aketekyi.
Adwin tree, 100, 110, 215, 235, 310
Adwira, 51 *n.*, 211. *See* Ejura.
Adwira tree, 51, 53, 166
Adwo (a title of respect), 280
Adwumfo : *see* Goldsmiths.
Afahye ceremony, 203–12
Afasie, 47, 48
Afema plant, 147
Afodie, 52
Afona : *see* Swords.
Aframa, Queen Mother of Tekiman, 156
Afrane Akwa, 282
Agai, 281
Aggrey beads, 147, 314
Agona clan, 288
Agya, 22, 25–7, 30–3
Agya 'ba, 24, 29
Agyapadie, 51 *n.*
Agya wofase, 24, 25, 30
Agyei Frimpon : *see* Anotchi.
Agyepon Ntara, 285
Agyimadie *ntoro* exogamous division, 48
Agyiman, King, 180, 207. *See* Kwaku Dua I.
Agyinadie *ntoro* exogamous division, 48, 49
Ahema, 77. *See* Queen Mothers.
Ahenfo, 222
Ahensan village, 280
Ahuntuo : *see* Treasure trove.
Ahuren, 57, 58
Ajua Pinaman, Queen Mother of Kokofu, 289
Akan people, 40, 113, 211 *n.*
Akankadie *ntoro* exogamous division, 48, 49
Akanye tree, 199 *n.*
Aketekyi, 316
Akodiawua, 57
Akomen : *see* Beads.
Akomfo : *see* Priests.
Akomfo maa : *see* Priestesses.
Akomnyumtufo (singers), 207
Akonta, 24, 25, 28–31
Akonta 'ba, 28, 34

Akore, 278
Akorobompi, 56–60
Akowuakra, 55
Akra yawa, 52
Akrafieso, 53
Akrasi, 288
Akua, a doll (female), 163
Akua Adai, 211
Akua Tia, the god, 163
Akuamoa, 282
Akuro Gyima Panyin, 60
Akurofonso, 281
Akwamea tree, 310
Akwanmofuo hene, 60
Akwasi, 55
Akyeame (spokesman): *see* 'Linguists'.
Akyekye, 73
Akyem, 47, 57
Akyia, Queen Mother of Asansu, 81 *n.*
Akyigyina (a charm), 209
Akyiwadie, 49, 50 *n.*
Ama Tiwa, 211
Ama Toa, Queen Mother of Tano Oboase, 173, 175
Amanhene: *see* Chiefs.
Amanwere sub-clan, 124
Ambra (red monkey), 183
Ame Yao, 193, 201; cave of, 189
Amma Amoako, 126
Amo Kotoku, 211
Amo Yao, King, 178, 179 *n.*
Amoa, the god, 167–9; rock of, 190–1; shrine of, 190, 192
Amoagye, 282
Amoako, legend of, 312
Amoakwade sub-clan, 124
Amosoansan, 282
Ampafrako, 281
Ampam, 281
Ampao, 57
Ampasakyi, 279, 284
Anamrako village, 57, 58
Ancestral spirits (*samanfo*), worship and propitiation of, 44, 46, 55, 59, 79, 83, 86, 92, 95–112, 116–20, 126, 132–4, 136–8, 145, 160, 164, 167, 175, 182, 200, 201, 203–6, 216–19, 236, 238, 239, 290 *n.*; spirit ownership of the land, 216, 217, 229, 230, 232, 235–6
Ani Koko, the god, 161
Animism, 86, 296
Ankamanefo, 278
Anofanu (a knife), 309
Anotchi (Okomfo-Anotchi, also called Agyei Frimpon), 57, 206, 215 *n.*, 224, 288, 314; story of his having brought down from the sky, by supernatural power, the 'Golden Stool', 289
Antelopes, 105, 235, 312; skin of, 302
Anthropological Department in Ashanti, 5–8, 10, 12
Antiedu, 281
Antwi Abunyawa, 285
Anyado (a salutation), 279
Apa (a rack), 199, 200, 201
Apakan (basket hammock), 159
Apia Kusi, 286
Apo ceremony at Tekiman, 152–71; *Apo* songs, 156–7
Armitage, Capt. Cecil H., 292
Asafodie: *see* Bosommuru.
Asafohene, 226
Asaman village, 56–61
Asansu, 57, 58, 81 *n.*
Asante hene: *see* Kings of Ashanti.
Asantemanso, 125
— Queen Mother of, 125–32
Asasebon river, 210
Asase Ya, 215
Asawu, 61
Ase, 25–8, 31, 32, 34
Aseda: *see* Thank-offerings.
Asene: *see* Heralds.
Ashanti Gold-fields Corporation, 326, 329 *n.*
Ashanti, measurements of the, 332–5.
Asiama Toku Asare, first Queen Mother of the Beretuo clan, 111, 112, 280
Asiase Pepra, 283
Asokore clan, 36
Asokwa, 47
Asonyeso (a place of worship), 199
Asuben river, 122, 124
Asubengya village, 122, 129, 131, 132, 330
Asubonten, the god, 161, 201, 206; shrine of, 200
Asumgyima, 283
Ata Birago, Queen Mother of Kokofu, 81 *n.*
Atakora Kwaku, 282, 284–6
Ate (a kind of creeper), 282
Ati Akosua, the god, 117, 118, 159, 161, 177, 200, 202; shrine of, 177, 178, 184
Atopere, 283
Attabubu, 315
Atwae sub-clan, 124
Awowa (mortgage), 230, 232, 234–6
Axes, God's (neoliths), 322, 323, 327, 331
Axim, 151
Aya tree, 147
Ayedie, 126

'Ba, 25–7, 31, 32
Baboons, 193
Baden-Powell, Lt.-Gen. Sir Robert, 286 *n.*

Badu, 285
Bagye, 65, 66
Balfour, Henry, 322, 324, 327, 329
Banie, 207
Bantama, 290
Baobab tree, 206
Barim dan: *see* Burial rooms.
Barimfo, 136
Basel Mission, 87 *n.*
Baya ceremony, witnessed at Nsoko, 136–8
Bea (a god), 146
Bea river, 146
Beads (*akomen*), 147, 187
Bekwai, 330; administrative division, 301; king of, 292
Belfield, Sir H. Conway, report on the Ashanti system of land tenure, 213, 222
Bells, brass, 95, 289, 290; of stools, 289, 290; use of, in ritual observances, 97, 108, 110, 111
Beretuo clan, 36, 111, 266, 280 *n.*, 282–5 *nn.*
Birds, 312, 316, 317; as totems, 47, 50 *n.*
Birempon, 283–5
Birth ceremonies, 54
Blood (*abusua*), transmission of, 11, 23, 33, 35–7, 41, 45, 46, 52, 77–9, 225, 229, 295
Boafo, 281, 284, 286
Bodom (a bead), 147
Bodua: *see* Cow-tails.
Bogya: see *Mogya*.
Bongo (*otromo*), 171, 208
Bonsam dua tree, 147, 310
Bonsu Kuma, King, 47, 291
Bonsu Panyin, King, 47, 126, 179, 180, 189, 190, 291
Bontuku, 291
Bosman, William, 10, 35, 39–41, 55 *n.*, 79 *n.*, 87, 91 *n.*, 121 *n.*, 140, 141, 151, 153, 234
Bosommaram *ntoro* exogamous division, 47, 50
Bosommuru *adwira* (plant), 53
Bosommuru *dan* (chamber), 53
Bosommuru *hene* (official), 53
Bosommuru *ntoro* exogamous division (also known as Asafodie, or Adufodie) 47–9, 52–3, 283 *n.*
Bosommuru river, 47, 48
Bosompra *ntoro* exogamous division, 47, 49, 51, 280 *n.*
Bosompra river, 47
Bosomtwe, Lake, 45, 47, 55–76, 105, 146, 206, 325; animals, birds, and fishes, 73, 75; appliances used for fishing, boating, &c., 62–6; forbidden methods of fishing, 61–2; 'gunpowder explosion' phenomenon, 45, 56, 62 *n.*, 66–8, 70, 73; lake fisher-folk, 45, 56, 57, 61–8, 73, 74; lake villages, present and submerged, 45, 55, 68; myths, 45, 49, 56, 195; *ntoro*, 45, 49, 54–6; physical features, 54–5, 74; rites in connexion with the lake spirit, 45, 58–61, 196, 266, 285; sounding operations, 45, 63, 68–72, 74, 75; supposed etymology of the name, 45, 55–6; traditional history, 45, 56–8.
Bosomtwe Rock, 193; ceremony at, 195–6
Botaase, 285
Bottles, for spirit ancestors, 200
Bowdich, Thomas Edward, 34, 35, 40, 78 *n.*, 93, 94, 203 *n.*, 226, 227 *n.*
Bowls: brass, 99, 100; eleven, in ceremonial use, 218; wooden, 97
Boy Scouts, 286 *n.*
Braima Fulani, 193
Brass pan (shrine of the gods), 74, 90, 130, 145–7, 149, 155, 161, 166, 169, 177, 180, 181, 186, 190, 199, 200, 202, 204, 290
Brass vessels: see *Kuduo*.
Brong people, 113, 114, 136, 151, 152, 157, 193, 203; *Adae* ceremony of, 114–20, 207; dialect of, 210
Buabasa (Opoku Mensa), 156
Burial-rooms of the blood royal, religious ceremony at the repair of the buildings of, 133–5
Bush buck, 47, 48
Busumuru, 104.
Buxton, L. H. Dudley, 8 *n.*; Note on measurements of the Ashanti, 332–5

Calabashes, 94, 117, 118, 175, 184–7
Campbell, J. Morrow, 326, 327
Canoes, 62, 63
Capital offences, punished with forfeiture, 227, 231
Capital punishment, 131, 138, 321 *n.*
Cardinal, Mr., 217
Cats, 234, 235
Cedar-tree, 101, 258, 262, 264, 278
Celts: *see* Neolithic implements.
Chairs, state, 133
Charms (*suman*, or lowest grade of superhuman power), 86, 90, 99, 100, 150, 158, 159, 162, 182, 209, 212, 310, 311, 322, 323; charm for driving away evil spirits, 99. *See* Fetishes.
Chiefs (*amanhene*, sing. *omanhene*): chair of, 203; courts of, 82, 131, 135, 227, 304–6; cursing of, 155–8;

drumming the names of, 265 ff.; drums of, 258, 263; household organization, 240, 263; in religious ceremonies, 94–6, 98–100, 108–12, 116–19, 126–31, 133–5, 144, 159, 165, 168–9, 200, 201, 204, 205, 211, 212; influence of the Queen Mother over, 82–3; levies in aid of expenses of funeral of, 227, 230, 240; obligations to fight for, 224–5, 230, 232, 240; ownership of land, 221, 224, 228, 229, 235, 239; 'palace' of, 83, 94, 99, 107, 109, 112, 116, 133, 142, 152, 159, 162, 203; sacrifices made at the installation of a new chief, 137; services of an agricultural nature rendered to, 227, 232, 239; soul-washers of, 205; sources of revenue of, 213, 226, 239; stool, 82, 203, 225, 288; stool lands, 220–2; sub-chiefs, 159; swearing fealty to chiefs, 225–6; treasurer of, 133; umbrella of, 159; war chiefs, 221; weights possessed by chiefs only, 321 *n.*; wives of, 78, 82
Child, illegitimate, law as to inheritance of, 39
Child-bearing, 85, 106; child-birth, 36, 77
Chipp, Major T. F., 62 *n.*
Christaller, Rev. J. G., 23, 34, 36, 45, 62, 87 *n.*, 203, 244, 248, 313
Christianity and native customs, 237 *n.* *See* Missions.
Clans, 77, 78, 124, 125; choice and enstoolment of a chief, 81–2; clan system, 85, 219, 224, 237; drum-history of, 258; exogamous divisions, 34–9, 79–80, 219, 225; extinction of, 79, 80; independent groups, 219–21; land ownership, 213, 219–22, 224, 228, 229, 231, 232, 235; law-makers of, 155; myth as to origin of, 121, 123–4, 214–15; stool property, 80, 213, 218
Claridge, Dr., 291, 292
Classificatory system, 11, 13, 21–44
Clay, red, 134; smeared in lines on the head and arm as a sign of mourning, 287
— white, smearing the face and body with, 137, 143–4, 155, 164, 177; sprinkling powdered clay in religious rites, 158–60, 162–4, 166, 187, 188, 195, 201, 209–11
Cloth, native, 95, 96, 99, 103, 105, 154, 187; dyed cloths, 133
Compounds, 136, 137, 142
Conception, ceremony subsequent to, but prior to birth, 50–2; 'conception' of Lake Bosomtwe, 60, 67; legend concerning, 48–9; native belief as to, 36, 37, 46, 48
Cooks, 96, 97, 111
Coomassie, 52, 57, 70, 74, 93, 125, 126, 131, 135, 146, 156, 199, 213 *n.*, 216 *n.*, 221, 227 *n.*, 261, 283, 287, 288; Central Government at, 221, 224; kings of, 288 *n.*; 'Golden Stool' of, 289–92; siege of (1900), 292; stool of, 124
Coomassie–Ejura trunk road, 314, 322
Corn, 47, 50 *n.*
Courts, native customary, 154
Cowries as a circulating medium, 234
Cows as sacrificial offerings, 61, 124, 128, 131; as totem, 47
Cow-tails (*bodua*), 158, 210; cow-tail switches, 165, 178, 184, 188, 189, 204
Crabs, 309, 316
Crocodiles, 48, 73, 312, 316; legend concerning, 49
Crops, annual custom in connexion with the eating of the first fruits of, 203–12
Crown Lands Bill (1894), 216
Cup, of leaves, 110
Cursing, festival of, 153, 154–8

Dabere, 109
Dama Bo, 147
Dancing at religious ceremonies, 158, 160, 162, 163, 174, 177, 187, 189, 209–12; dance tunes, 177
Dane (or flint lock) gun, 174, 182, 210
Day of rest, 215
Days of the week and forty-two day cycles, names of, 114–15
Death ceremonies, 54
Debt, recovery of, 234
Decorative arts, 300–15
Demoniacal possession, 147
Denkyira tribe, 288, 290
Descent, 22, 26–8. *See also* Matrilineal descent.
Dogs, 212; as sacrificial offerings, 61; as totems, 47, 48, 50
Dolls, wooden, 163
Domine tree, 147
Domma (a weight), 189, 319, 320
Dompa village, 58
Donkeys, 183
Doso (kilt), 158, 162
Dove, the, 309; legend concerning, 49
Drew, R., analysis of samples of mud from Lake Bosomtwe, 73, 75; report on composition of celts found in Ashanti, 329 *n.*, 330
Drink, thanksgiving for, 137

Drum language, 11, 100, 142, 143, 242–86; history of the Mampon division in the drum language, 243, 254, 258, 264–86; messages and news conveyed by, 242, 254–6; overture or prelude, 243; phonographic records, 243, 247, 264 ff.; reading of messages, 256–7; scope and limitations of, 255; 'set pieces', 254, 257; terminology, 243; verses at a religious ceremony, 101–3. *See also* Drums *and* Language.
Drummers (*odomankoma kyerema*), 53, 94, 100, 101, 103, 104, 142, 165, 177, 188, 243 *n.*, 248 *n.*, 252–65, 278, 279, 282, 284, 285 *n.*; customs concerning, 263; rank of, 263; salutation given to, 279 *n.*; stock-in-trade of, 257–8; totem of, 279 *n.*; the divine drummer, 278–81, 285
Drums, 53, 108, 109, 127, 147, 158, 193; *akasa* ('little speaker'), 252, 261; cloth, 259, 261; female drums, 248, 249, 262, 263, 266, 286 *n.*; making of, 243, 258; male drums, 248, 252, 258, 261–3, 266, 286 *n.*; outfit, 259–61, 265; pegs, 259, 279; religious observances connected with making of, 243, 258, 261–5; sticks, 252, 259, 260, 264; taboos, 262; talking drums, 89, 94, 100, 104, 111, 133, 152, 207–10, 309; tympanum, 252, 259; women debarred from touching or owning drums, 258, 263. Varieties of: *ago*, 94; *agyankotoankama*, 94; *akukudawi*, 94; *amane*, 94; *ampebi*, 109; *aprede*, 94; *asenkuo*, 94; *bomafo*, 94; *borobi*, 116; *fasafokoko*, 109, 111; *fontomfrom*, 165, 169, 210, 258, 261, 263; *kete*, 94; *mpebi*, 94; *mpintin*, 94; *mpintoa*, 177; *nimsa*, 94; *nkawiri*, 94, 109, 111; *ntumpane*, 94, 100, 133, 165, 258, 259, 261, 263, 286, *n.* 309; *nyanie*, 94; *prempeh* 111, 263 *n.* *See* Drum language.
Drunkenness, 135, 137, 154
Dua, 62
Duyker, 55, 58

Earth, the, native veneration for, 214–17
Earth Goddess, 150, 165, 166, 214–17, 226, 236, 265, 278
Earthquakes, 72
Edweno, 100
Eggs as offerings in religious rites, 158, 161–3, 178, 183–5, 190–1, 195–7, 258, 259, 262, 296, 297, 312
Ejura (Adwira), 51 *n.*, 211; *Afahye* ceremony at, 203–12; celts found at, 329
Ekuona clan, 36
Elephant grass, 54 *n.*
Elephants, 101, 196, 259, 261, 264, 265, 278, 279, 302, 309; elephant horns, 94, 111; elephant's skin, 216; elephant-tail switchers, 99, 103, 104
Ellis, Sir A. B., 90 *n.*, 91 *n.*, 93, 139, 142, 152, 237 *n.*
Emme, 99
Ena, 25, 30, 31, 83
Esono, 100
Eto: *see* Yams.
Etuo, 227
Executioners, 104, 111, 159, 160, 164, 219, 309, 310; rank of, 263; chief executioners, 282, 285
Exogamous patrilineal divisions, 11, 22, 23, 35, 47–8

Family, communistic state of the, 78, 79; family lands, 219–22, 224–32, 236, 237; family organization, 21, 23–44
Fan of Queen Mother, 112; fan-bearers, 103, 104
Fanti people, 40, 113, 114, 151, 231, 239
Fealty, ceremony of swearing, 225–6
Fetishes, 36, 68, 74, 99, 100, 116 *n.*, 150, 153, 158, 160, 201, 288; indiscriminate use of the term, 86, 90, 91, 145, 146; 'administering fetish', 109–10; drinking fetish, 226, 230; fetish medicine, 288, 289. *See* Charms.
Fig-tree as sanctuary, 128–31
Firampon, 281–4
Fire kept burning for dead ancestors, 138
Fish, 73–5, 105, 316; 'calling the fish', 202; 'children' of Tano, 202; fish-traps, 64–6
Fish-eagle, 99
Fishing, 56, 57, 61–7, 73, 74, 196; appliances used, 63–6, 74; methods forbidden, 61–2; taboos, 197
Fofie ceremonies, 182–7
Food offerings in religious rites, 117, 119, 196, 197; thanksgiving for, 137. *See* Meat.
Forest Bill (1911), 217
Forty-day periods of time (forty-two, forty-three), 92–3, 114–15, 123 *n.*, 185
Fosu, 285
Fowl, 278, 279, 281; as ritual offering, 47, 51–2, 58–61, 144, 149, 185–7, 192, 196, 201–2, 215, 258, 259, 262, 266, 285, 296, 310–12

Frogs, 317
Fufu (pounded yam or plantain), 51, 52, 235
Fuller, Sir Francis, 224
Funeral customs, 49, 50; expenses, rules as to contributions to, 226, 227, 240; intoxication at funerals, 135, 154
Funtumia Akore, 278
Fusu Kwebi, first Ashanti goldsmith, 301
Futuo, 302

German missions, 139, 140
Ghosts, 80, 83. *See* Ancestral spirits.
Goat, as taboo, 146
God (the Supreme Being): *see* 'Nyame.
Gods (*abosom*, sing. *obosom*), 51, 53, 56, 58, 86, 90, 99, 100, 116, 117, 119, 120, 125, 141, 144, 164, 172, 174, 175, 177–82, 190, 205, 216, 301, 322, 323; days sacred to, 55; genealogy of the most famous, 143, 145–6; relegated powers of, 141; shrines of, 116, 118, 143, 145–50, 155, 159, 160, 162–7, 210, 211; taboos, 49–50; umbrellas of, 161
Gold Coast Government, 6, 60, 84, 98, 127, 129, 169, 200, 213, 218, 291–3
Gold Coast Regiment, 193, 286
Gold dust, 134, 158, 189, 202, 238, 258, 290, 296, 300, 302, 304–6, 314; standard of weights in use, with approximate value in English currency, 320–1; gold-dust boxes, 302, 305, 306
Gold-mining industry, 325
Gold-smelting, 326
Gold weights, 300–13, 316–21; designs on, 142, 174, 302, 308; standards, 303–4, 320–1; weights in use, with approximate value in English currency, 313, 316–21; weights representing proverbs, 302–4, 306, 309, 310–13, 318, 319; weights with geometrical design, 302, 308; weights with human or animal forms, 302, 308; weights with representation of inanimate objects, 302.
Golden Stool, the, 287–93; attendants, 290; brass bells of, 289, 290; brought from the skies by supernatural power, 206 *n.*, 289; desecration of, 9, 10, 135, 227 *n.*, 287, 293; golden fetters of, 290; hidden for fear of capture, 9, 292–3; insignia, 290, 291; misconceptions concerning, 287–8, 292; never to be sat upon, 289 *n.*, 290, 292; not allowed to come in contact with the Earth, 216, 289 *n.*; origin and significance of, 288 ff.; possession of the stool necessary to the life and welfare of the nation, 289–90, 292–3; power of, in making the Ashanti a great people, 288–90; religious and spiritual significance of, 214 *n.*; shrine of the *sunsum* or soul, 289, 293, 295, 298; umbrellas of, 290
Goldsmiths (*adwumfo*), 301–13; a guild or brotherhood with special privileges, 301; art retained in certain families, 301; designs, 302, 305; equipment, 302; ethics of varying weights, 304, 320 *n.*; god of, 301; method of casting weights, 303, 306–8; scales, shovel, and spoons, 302, 305; weights, collection of, 302–4
Gongs, iron (*adawuru*), 158, 174, 179, 201, 202
'Grandfather' = a term of address, 96, 98, 107, 118, 156, 160, 166, 215
Grove, sacred, at Santemanso, 122–32; rites witnessed in the, 125–31, 218; taboos of the, 131–2
Guggisberg, Brig.-Gen. Sir F. G., 6, 295
Guggisberg, Lady, 10, 294, 299
Guinea corn, 183, 311
Guns, 165, 174, 210, 211, 312; gun-bearers, 95, 104
Gyaanadu, 279
Gyaanadu Asare, 278, 279
Gyaba, 285
Gyabom *suman*, 99, 100
Gyaman, 151, 179 *n.*, 180, 189, 190, 284 *n.* *See* Adinkira.
Gyami, chief of Kokofu, 289
Gyanie, 147
Gyase-hene, 57, 116, 117
Gyedua, 58
Gyirampon, 281

Half Assini, 195
Hamakyem plant, 147
Hamakyerehene plant, 147
Hantase village, 56
Harper, C. H., 6
Head-rest, 174, 177, 181
Heralds (*asene*), 95, 97, 98, 102, 111, 123, 124, 127, 159, 164, 184, 185, 204, 240, 282; head-dress of, 282; rank of, 263
Hodgson, Sir Frederic, and the 'Golden Stool', 291–2
Hoes, God's (neoliths), 322, 323, 327, 331
Horn-blowers, 94, 111, 134; rank of, 263 *n.*

Horns, 94
Horses, 212
Houses, 51, 94, 133, 136, 137, 167, 173, 188, 203–5, 236
Human sacrifice, 100
Hunters, 162, 163, 166, 168, 170–1, 205, 207–8, 235; traps of, 312
Huts: *see* Houses.
Hyenas, 150
Hyire, 52

Iguana (*mampam*), 170, 171
Illicit intercourse of king's sister, custom concerning, 78 *n.*
Illness, thanksgiving for recovery from, 137
Incest, punishment for, 138
Indian corn, 47
Inheritance, law of, 22, 29, 33, 35, 37, 39–44, 78, 79, 226, 237
Iron Age, 325, 327, 331
Iron currency, 324, 325
Iron-smelting, 324, 325, 327

Jamasi, 226 *n.*
Jeso, 81 *n.*
Juaben, 81, 131, 184, 224, 288
Juaben Sewa, Queen Mother of Juaben, 81 *n.*

Kahiri: *see* Head-rest.
Kakari (Kofi; erroneously Karikari), King, 47, 124, 291
Kakari, an old Ashanti aristocrat, information supplied by, 13, 22, 205 *n.*, 323; classification of ascendants and descendants of, 23–35, 41–2
Kakari Panyin, 323
Keith, Sir A., 332, 333
Kokokyinaka (bird), 280
Karikari: *see* Kakari.
Kings of Ashanti, 47, 52, 60, 61, 69, 82, 83, 103, 104, 124, 130, 131, 153, 156, 157, 196, 219, 221, 222, 290, 324, 325; conquests of, 224; cursing the king, punishment for, 131, 227; feet of, never to touch the ground, 216; in *Adae* ceremony, 102, 104, 106; invoking the power of a god to kill the king, 131; king's calendar, 114; list of, 288, 291; Lord Paramount of all land in his kingdom, 222, 224; palace of, 125 *n.*, 138; right to a share in a subject's estate, 226; ritual washing of *ntoro* by, 52–3; sources of revenue, 226; stool of, 290
Kingsley, Mary, 81, 82, 152, 162
Kitchen middens, 121, 124
Kitson, A. E., geological report on Lake Bosomtwe, 55, 68, 73, 74
Kobina Wusu, 122, 123, 125, 323
Kodia, 278
Kofi, King: *see* Kakari.
Kofi Afona, a young priest, story of the death of, 119, 161, 170–1
Kofi Duro, 173, 175–7
Kofi Kra, 200
Kofi Twinto, 211
Kojo Brenya, 203, 211
Kokofu, 58, 59, 60, 81 *n.*, 125, 131, 196, 224, 289, 314
Kokokyinaka (bird), 279
'Komfo: *see* Priests.
'Komfo Anotchi: *see* Anotchi.
Konkroma, a local god, 203, 206, 209, 210; shrine, 205, 210; taboos, 212; temple, 206, 207
Kontanase, 57
Kontonkyi, 281, 282, 284–6
Kora, 34
Kotoku people, 211 *n.* *See* Akan.
Kotokuo kese, 65, 66
Krakye Dente, 168
Kratchi, 256
Kuduo (brass vessels), 51–3, 118, 130, 134, 174, 210, 296; decorations on, 305, 308, 313–15; reverenced as shrines, 314; used in religious rites, 99, 100, 125, 128, 314
Kukua, 53
Kukuban Birimpon, 281
Kum Aduasia, the god, 159, 161
Kuntonkuni, 133
Kuntunso, 199
'Kunu, 24, 25, 28, 31, 32
'Kunu panyin, 24, 25, 29
Kupadakuo ceremony: see *Adae* ceremonies.
Kusi Boadum, King, 290
Kwa (a title of honour and respect), 283, 284
Kwabia Amanfi, King, 215, 288, 324
Kwadwumfo: *see* Minstrels.
Kwaitu, 282
Kwaku, a doll (male), 163
Kwaku Abu, 175
Kwaku Dua I, King, 69, 180, 291
Kwaku Dua Kuma, King, 291
Kwakuo, 47
Kwakyi, 281
Kwasu, 52
Kwawu, 278
Kwawuakwa, 282
Kwaye, 282
Kwesi Fo, 211, 212
Kwesidae ceremony: see *Adae* ceremonies.
Kyeniefiafo, 103

Lakes, gods bearing the names of, 143, 146

Lamps, bronze, 309
Land tenure, 213–41 ; aids, 230 ; alienation, 222, 223, 228–39 ; cultivation, 215 ; customary laws, 213 ; escheat, 221, 227, 240 ; family or communal ownership, 213, 219–21, 222, 224–32, 236, 237 ; fee simple, the commonest form of tenure, 228–9, 231–2, 238–9 ; fee tail, 229–30 ; freehold, 228–30 ; gifts of lands, 221 ; grants obtained by conquest, 221 ; individual ownership non-existent, 226, 229–31 ; leasehold, 228, 230 ; life interest, 229 ; military service as a condition of tenure, 224–5, 230 ; mortgage, 230, 232–6 ; ownership of the soil, 213, 216–18, 222, 228 ff.; reliefs (sums payable on the death of a tenant), 226 ; rum and wine necessary in transfer of land, 137 ; sale, 221, 231–8 ; — aversion to, 216, 223, 231, 236, 238 ; services, land held by, 224–5, 227, 231, 240 ; spirits of the departed the real landowners, 216–18, 229 ; stool lands, 213, 218, 220–2, 231 ; *tramma* sale, 234–7 ; transfer, 230–7, 239 ; value of, 223, 240 ; wills of land, 237–9
Language, Ashanti : accentuation of syllables, 246–8, 251–2, 257 ; consonants, 252, 254, 257 ; etymology, 246 ; gesture (of face, hands, arms, or feet), 246–7 ; holophrases, 250 *n.*, 253, 254, 257, 266 ; nouns, tone of, 248–50 ; pauses, stops, or punctuation, 246–7, 252, 254, 257 ; phonetics, 244, 246, 254 ; pronunciation, 246 ; speed of spoken words, 246, 248 ; stress or emphasis, 246–7 ; tone or musical pitch, 244–53, 256–7, 266 ; verbs, tone in, 250–1 ; vowel sounds, 251–2, 254, 257. *See* Drum language.
Law, native customary, 154, 213 ff.
Leat, F. W., 314
Leopards, 47, 49, 127, 129, 148, 150, 157, 160, 165, 166, 207, 208
'Linguist,' or spokesman (*okyeame*), 58, 95, 96, 98, 103, 104, 111, 116–19, 122, 124, 130, 159, 163, 165, 166, 168, 178–80, 187, 188, 204, 210, 212, 235, 240
Lions, 302, 303, 316

Mampam : *see* Iguana.
Mampon, 13, 101, 111 *n.*, 136, 204, 264, 283, 286 *n.* ; chief of, 216 *n.*, 224–5, 226 *n.* ; Queen Mother of, 294–7 ; history of the Mampon division, in the drum language, 266–78 ; translation of the drum-history, 278–86
Man, origin of, traditions concerning, 48–9, 121, 123–4
Mangin, T. R. O., 306 *n.*
Maniampon, 281
Manu, Queen Mother of Coomassie, 289
Marett, Dr. R. R., 13
Margoliouth, Professor D. S., 315
Marriages, 22, 29–37, 79 ; cross-cousin, 31, 38 ; enjoined, 22, 38 ; matrilocal, 229 ; privileged, 22, 38, 78 *n.* ; prohibited, 22, 29, 34, 37–9, 77, 78 ; taboos, 39 ; recognition of the husband's *ntoro* taboos by the wife, 50–1 ; wine at the marriage of one of royal blood, 137–8.
Mary, Princess, Viscountess Lascelles, presentation to, by the Queen Mothers and women of Ashanti, of a silver stool as a wedding gift, 294–8 ; the Princess's reply, 299
Matrilineal descent, 35–7, 46, 77–85, 229, 237, 266, 295
Me'ba, 32
Me'yere, 31
Meat, cooked and uncooked, in ritual observances, 97–9, 105, 106, 108, 112, 130, 144, 169, 236
Mecca, 179
Medicinal plants and trees, 147, 311
'Medicine,' 288, 289
Medicine man, 161, 162 *n.*, 310, 311. *See* Priests.
Meiklejohn, Lt.-Col., 286 *n.*
Mensa Bonsu, King, 69, 291
Menstruation, 37, 77, 81, 82, 95, 106, 131, 165 *n.*, 183, 263
Mervyn-Smith, Mr., 326, 329 *n.*
Metal-casting, 143
Metal-workers' art, 300–15
Military service (*osako*), land held by, 224–5, 240
Minstrels (*kwadwumfo*), 103, 104, 109, 112, 133, 219, 240
Missions, Christian, 87, 91, 139, 140, 237 *n.*
Mkwankwa, 110
Mma, 32, 33, 125
Mogya (or *bogya*), 35, 36, 45, 77, 78
Mohammedans, 140, 164
Monkeys, 47, 50, 183, 312, 319 ; monkey-skin hats, 102, 111, 282
'Mother-right', 79
Motor roads, 121, 125
Mourning, wearing of, 133, 287 *n.*
Mpapare kotokuo, 64–5
Mpata, 62
Müller, W. T., 305 *n.*

Mural paintings, 173–5, 182
Murder, penalty for, 131
Muruwukuo ceremony: *see Adae* ceremonies.

Nabuo (iron currency), 324, 325
Nampansa, 124
Nana, 26, 28, 31, 33, 38
Nana n'ka'so, 28, 34, 39
Nana panyin, 34
Neolithic implements, 322–31; celts, 11, 121, 142, 193, 265; — long, 323, 324, 327–31; — short, 323, 327–31; cones, 327; cylindrical stones with blunt ends, 327
Nets, fishing, 61, 62, 64–6
New, Sir Henry F., 14
Nkabire (a charm), 310
Nkansadie *ntoro* exogamous division, 48
Nkoranza village, 121 *n.*, 152, 179 *n.*, 184, 188; Queen Mother of, 153
Nkrawo, 57
Nkwan, 52
Nnonko mma, 44
Nokwabo, 126
Norman, J. R., on fishes from Ashanti, 74, 75
Nsa, 95
Nsanu, 212
Nsoko, 314, 315; *Baya* ceremony at, 136–8
Nsuta, 184, 282 *n.*
Ntakwa, 64, 65
Ntano (a weight), 158, 321
Ntim Gyakari, king of Denkyira, 288–90
Ntoa, the god, 191; temple of, 188
Ntorikoko, 57
Ntoro, 11, 22, 23, 29, 38, 39, 43, 45, 202; exogamous divisions, 45–54; classification, 45, 47–8, 77, 80, 266; days of observance, 45, 47–8; rites, 45, 50–4; taboos and totems, 45–50, 263; transmission of, 36–7, 46, 77, 78; washing the, 162, 314
Ntorowa: *see* Rattles.
'Nua, 25, 31, 33, 42
'Nua kuma, 24, 26, 27, 29, 30
'Nua mma, 31
'Nua panyin, 24, 25
'Nua panyin 'ba, 26, 27
Nuama, chief of Coomassie, 261
Nuanom, 42
Nwansane, 47
'Nyame, or Nyankopon (the Supreme Being, or Sky God), 48, 49, 51, 52, 54, 86, 90–1, 94, 102, 111, 112, 148, 150, 164 *n.*, 165, 166, 173, 174, 176, 178, 179, 181, 182, 214, 216, 226, 237 *n.*, 264, 265, 278, 281, 289, 295, 297, 311, 312, 322, 323, 330; altars to, 142, 144, 323; offerings to, 144; proverbs alluding to, 142; sons of, myth concerning, 145–6, 195; temples to, 94, 142, 144, 175
'Nyame Dua, 142
Nyampasakyi sub-clan, 124

Oath, the great, 124, 131
Oath fees, 83
Obi country, 288
Obi Okomfo (fetish priest), 288 *n.*
Obiri Yeboa Manwu, King, 288
Obirompon, 281
Obo Kyerewa, the god, 117, 161, 170
Oboase, 184
Oboroni Kwesi (Europeans), 305
Obosom: *see* Gods.
Obuasi, celts found near, 330; centre of gold-mining industry, 325
Odawuru: *see* Gongs.
Odi Kofi, 57
Odom tree, 147–9, 311
Odomankoma (the Creator), 124, 190
Odomankoma kyerema: *see* Drummers.
Odonko 'ba, 43, 44. *See* Slaves.
Odonko 'ba oba, 43
Odum, 57
Oduro, 285
Odwuma fufuo, 62
Ofema tree, 259, 260, 261, 264, 279
Offin river, celts from the, 323, 324, 330, 331
Ofori Kuron, 155
Ofosu, 285
Okankane, 48
Okomfo (pl. *akomfo*): *see* Priests.
Okomfo-Anotchi: *see* Anotchi.
Okra, 46
Okwawuo, 283
Okwawuakwa, 285
Okyeame: *see* 'Linguist'.
Omanhene: *see* Chiefs.
Onipantwi, 57
Onyame: *see* 'Nyame.
Onyame dua, 51
Opo (a god), 146
Opo (the sea), 146
Opoku, a hunter, 207
Opoku Fofie, King, 47, 290
Opoku Ware, King, 47, 290, 316
Ornaments, gold and silver, 143
Orosa, 316
Osafo, 283, 284
Osai (given as a title), 283
Osai Bonsu, paramount chief of Mampon, 13, 111, 211, 264, 286, 298
Osai Bonsu Kuma, King, 47, 291
Osai Bonsu Panyin, King, 47, 126, 179, 180, 189, 190, 291

Osai Fwidie, 283 *n.*
Osai Kojo, a drummer, 100, 261, 279 *n.*, 284 *n.*
Osai Kwadwo, 290
Osai Kwame, King, 47, 290
Osai Tutu, King, 47, 57, 180, 206 *n.*, 215 *n.*, 283, 284, 286, 288 ; achieves greatness for the Ashanti by means of 'the Golden Stool!', 289–90
Osai Yao, King, 47, 291
Osako : *see* Military service.
Osene : *see* Heralds.
Osese tree, 296, 297
Oti Akenten, King, 56, 60, 288
Otieku Amosoansan, 282
Otromo : *see* Bongo.
Otwe, 55, 58, 105
Otwedodo, 206
Owoko (Oyoko) clan, 124, 125, 215, 221, 224
Owusu Akwasi, 284
Owusu Sekyire, 284, 286
Ox, 47. *See* Cows.
Oyoko : *see* Owoko.

Padua, 62, 63, 65, 69, 71, 73
Papare, 64 *n.*
Palm-nut fibre, 307
Palm wine, 47, 48, 50, 94, 108, 116, 117, 157, 167, 184, 185, 191, 196, 211, 235
Pantheons, 141, 162, 163, 167, 187, 206, 211
Patrilineal exogamous divisions, 11, 22, 23, 35, 47–8
Pepper, 311
Pepra, 283
Philbrick, J. A., attempt of, to sound Lake Bosomtwe, 68, 74
Pinanko, 156
Pine-apple fibre, 305
Plantains, 51, 96, 105, 215
Porcupines, 99, 101, 157, 207, 256 *n.*
Pots, eight, in the sacred grove, 122, 124–31
Pottery, ancient, 190, 192, 296, 325–6
Pramma tentenso, 53
Prempeh, King, 69, 81 *n.*, 105, 124, 156, 225, 314 *n.*, 325 ; banishment, 291–2
Priestesses (*akomfo maa*), 122, 125, 155, 160, 164, 182, 183, 187–90, 195, 203, 206, 209–12 ; dancing of, 158, 160, 187 ; ecstatic, 150 ; stools of, 155, 161, 164, 167 ; umbrella of, 159, 160 ; water-gazing by, 163
Priests (*akomfo*), 52, 109, 110, 116, 118, 119, 138, 143–4, 147, 149, 150, 155, 170–2, 174–201, 211, 212, 323 ; dancing in religious rites, 158, 160, 162, 163 ; dress of, 158, 162, 164 ; ecstatic, 150 ; high priests, 153, 159, 161, 185, 189, 190–2 ; mode of dressing the hair, 309–10 ; stools of, 155, 161, 164, 167 ; umbrella of, 155
Property, inheritance of, 22, 29, 33, 35, 37, 39–44, 78, 79
Proverbial sayings, 223, 302–4, 306, 309–13, 318, 319
Pusa, 107
Python, the, 47, 73 ; myth concerning, 48, 49, 50

Queen Mothers, 10, 13, 50, 77, 81, 82, 94, 104, 111, 122, 125, 126, 134, 156, 165, 173, 205, 211, 219, 233, 235, 240, 258, 289 ; compounds of, 136, 137 ; daily attendance at the chief's 'palace', 83 ; desirability of Government recognition of, 84–5 ; fan of, 112 ; entitled to share in court fees, 83 ; in *Adae* ceremony, 105–6, 111 ; influence over the moral welfare of the race, 84–5 ; influence over other women, 84 ; jurisdiction in their own courts, 83 ; part in the choice and enstoolment of a chief, 82 ; petitions addressed to, 82 ; presentation of a silver stool to Princess Mary by, 10, 294–9 ; privilege of sitting and speaking in court, 82–3 ; right to choose one wife for a chief, 83 ; stools of, 81, 83, 204, 294, 297

Rafts, 62, 63, 68, 69, 72
Rake, E. O., 286 *n.*
Ram, 207
Rattles (*ntorowa*), 174, 210
Real property, English law of, its affinity to the customary laws relating to Ashanti land tenure, 213, 223, 237
Regents, 83
Reincarnation, 80
Reindorf, Rev. C. C., 288 *n.*, 324, 325
Relationship terms, 22, 23–36
Religion : Ashanti conception of the Supreme Being, 139–44 (*see* 'Nyame) ; levies for religious customs, 227 ; religious aspect of land tenure, 214–18, 223 ; sources of information, native and European, 87–90. Religious rites and ceremonies : *Adae* ceremonies, 92–120 ; *Afahye* ceremony, 203–12 ; *Apo* ceremony, 152–71 ; *Baya* ceremony, 136–8 ; ceremony witnessed in the sacred grove at Santemanso,

125–30 ; ceremony witnessed while the burial quarters of kings and queens were undergoing repair, 133–5 ; ceremonies witnessed in connexion with the lesser gods, and the making of a shrine, 147–50 ; ceremonies witnessed in connexion with the god Tano, 177–87, 190–2, 200–1 ; ceremony at the source of the river Tano, 195–8 ; observances connected with the making of drums, 243, 258, 261–5
Rest-house, 136, 162
Rice crop, thanksgiving ceremony concerning the, 136–8
Rivers, Dr., 21
Rivers, gods bearing the names of, 143, 146
Robertson, T., on the explosion of gas on freshwater lakes, 76
Ross, Capt. O. F., 316–18
' Royals ', 103, 128, 134, 157, 284
Rum, use of, in ritual observances, 94, 104, 108, 110–12, 127, 131, 134, 231, 238, 258, 259 ; in the transfer of land, 137

Sadwa, 108
Safohene, 57, 61
Salaga, 256
Saliva in ritual ceremony, 54
Sale (*tramma*) of movable property and of land, 234–5
Salt offering, 211, 212
Saman (spirit), 53
Samando (spirit-world), 53, 80
Samanfo : *see* Ancestral spirits.
Samansie (wills of land), 237–9
Sanahene, 94
Sanctuary, fig-tree as, 128–31
Sandals, 103, 104, 111, 122, 123, 127, 162, 216, 225 ; sandal-bearers, 103, 133, 216 ; meaning of the office, 216
Santeman Kobina, 127 ; invocation of, 129, 132
Santemanso, the sacred grove at, 122–32
Sarbah, J. M., 35 *n.*, 40 *n.*
Sasa (spirit), 59, 60, 100
Sasa boa (animals with a powerful spirit), 208
Sasa mmoa (animals spiritually dangerous), 207
Scottish Mission, 87 *n.*
Seduction, redress for, 154, 158
Sekyire country, 281, 282
Seligman, Mrs., 13, 21, 22 *n.*, 34 *n.*
Seligman, Professor, 13, 23
Semua (tuyers used in blast furnaces), 326, 327, 330
Senianepo, 56, 57
Serval, 48
Sewa, 25, 31
Sewa 'ba, 24, 30
Sewa Akoto, late Queen Mother of Mampon, 10, 13 ; speech on presentation of silver stool for transmission to Princess Mary, 294–5
Sexual intercourse, 154, 165 *n.*
Shama, 47
Shea-butter, 313
Sheep as sacrificial offerings, 94, 96–9, 107–8, 112, 125, 127–30, 134, 144, 149, 168–9, 196, 202, 204, 211, 212, 237
Shields, 281, 317
Shrines, 90, 116, 210–12 ; the making and consecration of a shrine, 145–50. *See* Brass pan.
Sibire, 63
Sika dayanfo, 290
Silk-cotton tree, 210, 311
Silver Stool, a Queen Mother's, 216, 294 ; replica presented to Princess Mary as a wedding present, 10, 294–9 ; description of the stool, 295–6 ; consecration of the stool, 297–8
Silversmiths, 294, 297
Sky God : *see* 'Nyame.
Slaves (*odonko ba*), 222, 227 ; children of, 43 ; lands granted to, 230 ; sale of, 234, 235 ; status of, 42, 43 ; succession to property by, 40, 42, 43
Snail, edible, 47, 48, 115, 168
Snakes, 309, 312
Sodofo, 96, 97, 111
Songs, 201, 202, 206–9
Soul or spirit (*sunsum*), the, 12, 46, 55, 92, 153, 198, 289, 290, 293, 296
Soul-washers, 164, 205
Spirit (*sunsum*) : *see* Soul.
Spirits : demoniac, 147 ; revengeful, 99, 100, 217, 258. *See also* Ancestral spirits.
Spoon, brass, 130
Staves, silver-topped, 187
Stone Age, implements of the, 322–9
Stools : ancestral, 95–8, 104, 137, 138, 165, 204, 291 *n.* ; blackened or smoked, 83, 92, 95, 105, 107, 109, 110, 112, 117–19, 155, 161, 165, 167, 185, 204, 211, 281 *n.* ; consecration of, 297–8 ; levies for, 227 ; repository of owner's soul, 298 ; succession to, 22, 33, 37, 39, 42, 78, 295 ; white, 92, 94, 116, 175, 203. Stool-carriers, 94–9, 105–7, 109–12,

118, 119, 130, 161, 164, 204, 205; stool-carvers, 294, 296; stool debts, levies for liquidating, 227; stool house, 84, 92, 94, 99, 105–7, 109, 117, 203, 204, 211, 218; stool land, 213, 218, 220, 221, 222, 231; stool palavers, 84; stool revenue, sources of, 226, 227, 239, 240; stool taboos, 298. *See also* Golden Stool, Silver Stool.
Story-tellers, 162
Suadomo: *see* Tano.
Suben river, 52
Succession to property, law of, 39–44, 78, 79, 229, 237
Suman: *see* Charms, Fetishes.
Summe tree, 122, 164, 166, 167, 215
Summum ceremony, 161
Sunsum: *see* Soul.
Sunyani, 171
Swastika, 302, 308, 319
Swimmers, men and women, 63
'Swish' (water and earth), in religious ceremony, 133–4
Swords (*afona*), 158, 174, 225, 281; state sword, 118; sword-bearers, 95, 97, 103, 111, 159, 201

Ta Amoa, 206
Ta Asubonten, 206
Ta Bonia, 206
Ta Kese (or Ta Mensa), the god, 116–19, 153, 156, 166, 168, 172, 201, 202; shrine of, 116, 118, 155, 160–2, 167, 169; sons of, 167; temple of, 118, 159, 161, 163, 164, 167, 169; umbrella of, 161, 164
Ta Kobina, 118
Ta Kofi, 125, 161
Ta Kojo, 161, 206
Ta Konkroma Kuma, 206
Ta Konkroma Kuma II, 206
Ta Kora: *see* Tano.
Ta Kuntum, 161
Ta Kwame, 206
Ta Kwesi (Kramo Kese), the god, 161, 164, 177, 184, 206; dedication of a shrine to, 147–9; umbrella of, 164
Ta Mensa: *see* Ta Kese.
Ta Toa, 161
Ta Yao, 161, 301
Taboos, clan, 39; fishing, 61–3, 67; marriage, 39; *ntoro*, 46–8; of the gods, 167, 171, 172, 182–3, 197, 212; of priests, 146; of stool, 298; of talking drums, 263
Takyi, story concerning, 73
Tamiriwa, 47, 48
Tano (Ta Kora), greatest of Ashanti earth-gods, 11, 54, 89, 102, 146, 156, 157, 161, 165, 168, 172, 179–81, 195–6, 208, 209, 212; cave of, 181, 189–94; ceremonies in connexion with cult of, 199–202 (*see also* Tano river); drums of, 177; rock of, 183–7; a visit to the rock, 188–94; shrine of, 150, 174–8, 183, 185–7, 190, 199; 'sons' of, 199, 200, 203, 206, 301; taboos, 182–3, 187, 212; temple of, 150, 173, 176, 177, 188, 190; a visit to his temple, 172–87; tolerance of, 181
Tano river, 54, 146, 147, 165, 172, 181, 188, 193, 195, 197–202, 204, 206, 210; ceremony at the source of the river, 195–8; customs connected with, 202; offerings to, 202; water of, drunk as an ordeal, 202
Tano Kwampere, 197
Tano Oboase village, 58 *n.*; 155, 172, 173, 175, 189, 195
Tano Twumpuduo, 207
Tanokwa (slaves of Tano), 165, 200, 201, 212
Tanosu village, 155, 160, 200, 202
Tekiman, 167, 172, 184–6, 190, 191, 200; *Adae* ceremony at, 113–20; *Apo* ceremony at, 152–71; kings of, 179 *n.*
Tekyia Kwame, 117
Temple, Lieut.-Col. Sir Richard, 5
Temples, 116, 118, 163, 164, 167, 169, 182, 207, 209, 210, 212
Testamentary depositions, 237–9
Thank-offering, 238
Thanksgiving customs, 137
Thomas, N. W., 300
Thomson, Prof. A., 333
Thursday a day of rest, 215
Togoland, iron furnaces in, 325
Tortoises, 47, 48, 302, 316
Totems, 46–50, 280 *n.*
Traditional lore, 219
Tramma: *see* Sale.
Treasurer, chief's, 133
Treasure-trove, ownership of, 227
Tremeane, Major, 324
Tribal land, 231; lore, 219; stools, 239
'Truthful stone', the, 126, 127, 128
Tuabodom, 155
Twe, anthropomorphic lake god, 49, 55, 56, 61. *See* Bosomtwe, Lake.
Twe Adodo, 56
Tweaduampon: *see* Nyame.
Tweneboa (or *tweneduru*) tree, 258–9
Twins, customs concerning, 99
Twumpuduo, 207
Tylor, Sir E. B., 214, 244 *n.*

Umbrellas, 188, 193; of chiefs, 103; of gods, 161, 164, 210; of king's stool, 204, 298; of priest, 155; of priestess, 159; umbrella carriers, 103

Vulture, 285

War, levies for expenses of, 227
Wari (a kind of draughts), 174, 290
Washings, ritual, 39, 46, 52–3
Water: as a life-giving force, belief concerning, 146; divine origin of, 54; use of, in ritual observances, 95, 96, 105, 107, 110
Water-gazing, 163
Water-sprinkling ceremony, 164–6, 181, 197, 202, 204, 211
Weights: *see* Gold weights.
Wenki village, 121 *n.*, 152
Whisky, use of, in ritual observances, 59, 94, 97, 98, 104, 262
Widows, sprinkling of, with water, 202
Wife, property of, 40
Wild dog, 47, 48, 50 *n.*
Wine in ritual observances, 97, 110, 117–19, 129, 149, 175, 184–7, 191–2, 196–7, 201, 204, 211, 230, 233, 259, 262–4; at the marriage of one of royal blood, 137–8; in the transfer of land, 137
Wisirika, 175, 185
Witchcraft, 153
Witch-doctors, 152, 153
Witches (*abayifo*), 265, 280
Wofa, 22, 25, 27, 32, 77
Wofa 'ba, 24, 25, 30
Wofase, 25, 27, 31–3
Women: capable of holding land, 231; influence and position of, 77–85, 266; inherited as property, 79; physical inferiority, 81; stool-carriers, 161; stools of, 83; succession to property by, 40, 42–3. *See also* Blood, transmission of; Matrilineal descent; Queen Mothers.
Wuku ceremony, 83
Wukudae ceremony: see *Adae* ceremonies.

Ya Akyaa, Queen Mother of Coomassie, 156
Ya Gyansua, genealogy of, 28, 34, 35–6
Ya Santewa, Queen Mother of Jeso, 81 *n.*
Yams (*eto*), 47, 48, 51–3, 96, 105, 107, 144, 167, 199, 203, 205, 210–12, 215, 235, 236
Yao Kramo, 117–19, 166, 168–9, 200
Yao Kyira, chief of Aboabogya, 9
'*Yere*, 25, 27, 30–2, 34
'*Yere 'ba*, 28
'*Yere kuma*, 24, 25, 28–31
Yerefie, 284
Yim Aware, 95 *n.*

Zeller, 307, 308 *n.*, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313

Printed in England at the Oxford University Press